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THROUGH THE ZULU COUNTRY



ISANDHLWANA
FROM BOKKE'S DRIFT ROAD

THROUGH THE ZULU COUNTRY

ITS BATTLEFIELDS AND ITS PEOPLE

BY

BERTRAM MITFORD

LATE OF THE CAPE CIVIL SERVICE : AUTHOR OF 'OUR ARMS IN ZULULAND'

WITH FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, & CO., 1 PATERNOSTER SQUARE

1883

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INTRODUCTION.

IN the following pages the Author cannot promise a narrative of hairbreadth escape and thrilling adventure, but simply an account of everyday experiences during a trip through Zululand in 1882, undertaken with the object of making the round of the battlefields in succession—which, till then, had not been done by anybody—mixing with the people, observing their character as well as manners and customs, and gathering their opinion on the subject of the recent campaign and other questions relating to themselves and their national polity.

That the country, hitherto but little visited, and previous to the late war scarcely known, is an interesting one, and destined to become even

more so, there can be no doubt ; wherefore the Author feels that no apology is needed for further introducing it and its people to British readers.

He also takes this opportunity of tendering grateful acknowledgments to the many friends whose kind assistance so largely facilitated the carrying out of his plans.

LONDON : *January* 1883.

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THROUGH THE ZULU COUNTRY.



CHAPTER I.

Southward Ho!—A floating population—A night down Channel—Plymouth—Undesirable company—Delay—A Sou'wester—'A wet sheet and a flowing sail'—A Constitutional under difficulties—The Sea Demon—The Bay of Biscay—A smash.

RAIN, rain—nothing but rain; skies dank and misty, swathed in one vast curtain of yellowish grey; not a break anywhere, gloom and dampness all-prevailing. Such is the state of things as I find myself, at about noon on a day late in November, one of a depressed-looking throng waiting to claim their goods and chattels on the wharf at Southampton. We have all just emerged from the nine o'clock train from Waterloo, the last in time to enable us to catch the Cape mail steamer, and most of us are bound for the sunny shores of Southern Afric; and meanwhile we stand shivering in the cold raw atmosphere, futilely wishing those wretched jacks-in-office who rule the wharf

arrangements with a rod of iron would but hurry up a little. But the wisest and only plan is to keep cool—mentally, I mean—and take things as they come. At last the necessary ceremonial is completed, and we are passed out one by one, with our luggage, on to the dripping quay, thence to the steam tender which is to convey us on board; and we stand huddled in groups on the soaking deck, awnings and canvas but ill keeping out the continuous and heavy downpour.

There is the colonist returning with his family after a stay in the old country, which, in his heart of hearts, he is not at all sorry to see the last of; there is the business man, whose interests maybe necessitate a frequent run backwards and forwards, but who hopes one day to make his last trip and cast anchor for good and all on this side. Young ladies going to join their friends in the colonies, or on missions whose objects are best known to themselves. Invalids, a few are also there—fleeing from the drear chills of an English winter, or seeking *en permanence* a more congenial clime. Young Britain going out to try its luck in fresh woods and pastures new, crowded out of the old country perhaps, or in search of a more adventurous life. Many, of course, have friends seeing them off, generally of more woful appearance than the intending migrant. Nor must we forget the

inevitable sprinkling of mysterious looking gentlemen who have ‘something to do with the Company’—no one knows exactly what, or cares—and we have a summary of our living freight, standing with the luggage piled up in front amid wraps, bundles, bird cages, bandboxes, and all the varied articles of hand-impedimentum of a crowd of travellers. At last the moorings are cast off, and away we go, plunging and tossing, into Southampton Water, the rain driving in upon us as we dash along head to wind, and for a quarter of an hour the sole object in life is to try and find a dry place to stand in. Presently the masts and yards of a big steamship appear through the mist, her black hull looming up indistinctly as she heaves to the swell, and in a few minutes we are alongside of one of the Union Company’s best vessels. A general scramble for light luggage, a rush on the part of two or three fidgetty mortals for heavy, and we are on board our floating home. All is bustle—the forepart of the ship swarming with emigrants moving to and fro like a disturbed ants’ nest; a few of the saloon passengers are already in possession, among them a number of Germans, old and young—for the vessel has been to Hamburg before taking us up at Southampton. The hatches are open, and the donkey engine is hard at work lowering cases into the hold, our baggage

is hoisted on board in its turn, and finds its way to our respective cabins—more bustle in hitting off these, stewards rushing about, shore people getting into everybody's way, and generally picking out the busiest men to ask a dozen questions of at once. I take things very coolly, and everything settles down in no time; I find my berth, get my luggage brought down, and there I am, snug for the next month. But let us take a look round. The cabin is a four berthed one; there are the bunks one above the other in two blocks, a couple of washstands and looking-glasses, racks across the ceiling for hats, parcels, &c., and a campstool; and, being an outside cabin, we are happy in the possession of a port hole—no small advantage in the tropics. I am fortunate in having but one cabin mate, for it occurs to me that although three persons may constitute a crowd in the Riot Act, four in a nine foot space would constitute a very considerable one: but we are only two, and are thankful.

And now the bell rings for luncheon, and I begin to take stock of my fellow passengers, though, as nearly all have friends seeing them off, it is difficult to determine exactly who isn't going ashore. The question is cleared by the ringing of the shore bell, and there is a general scramble up the companion stairs; the tender is just leaving,

nor will it come off again ; therefore, whoever does not want to risk an involuntary trip to Plymouth had better look sharp. The gangway is blocked ; copious ‘ good-byes ’ are interchanged ; amid much waving of handkerchiefs, and some rather husky attempts at cheering, the tender casts off and we are left to our own devices.

But the clank of the capstan and the first beat of the propeller warns us that our voyage has begun. The rain has ceased ; the clouds are hanging in white jagged masses over the water, and through the rifts here and there can be seen the distant hills with their miles and miles of forest ; but the dark hand of winter is upon that loveliest of lovely landscapes, and everything wears a drooping and dilapidated appearance. The big ship moves steadily on, dropping down the calm waters of the Solent, and many of our friends begin to think a voyage is not such a dreadful thing after all ; but wait a bit. The high, pointed cliffs of the Isle of Wight are towering above us, and we glide smoothly along past the Needles ; then a rocking motion becomes more and more perceptible, and we rise and dip to the freshening breeze as we pass out into the Channel.

And a darkening curtain descends upon the sea ; Southampton has faded into mist behind ; a light from the shore gleams out redly ; the wash

of the waves on yonder beach mingles with the murmur of the salt sea breeze, while the wailing scream of gulls circling around the chalk cliffs rings weirdly through the twilight, and each bold headland looming up in the deepening shadows stands forth like a watch-tower over the restless waters. The passengers are standing about in groups or pacing up and down in twos and threes, many with dire misgivings as to the results of the next hour. The dinner bell rings; this is the test, and thin will be the muster round the festive board this evening. And so it turns out; of the few bold enough to make even so much as a show at table, nearly half drop off and retire early from the field. A handsome apartment is the saloon, occupying the whole width of the vessel, and well lighted with swinging lamps; the three long tables are duly garnished with 'fiddles,' which, for the benefit of the uninitiated, are not orchestral instruments, but wooden frames fixed to the tables to keep everything from slipping off in lively weather such as we are now experiencing, for there is plenty of motion, and we are rolling in brisk fashion. Stewards stagger about deftly with the dishes; now and then a crash is heard as a new hand comes to grief with his load of crockery; your soup empties itself into your lap, and the nuts destined for dessert incontinently forsake their

dishes and steeplechase up and down the tablecloth.

But dinner is got through somehow, and I betake myself on deck. We are ploughing along under a good head of steam, the masts and yards sway beneath the starlit sky, the binnacle lights throw a red glow around, and in the distance a dark shadowed coast line is just discernible. No less than the lights, the sounds are all of the sea; the splash of the waves, the shrill whistle of the boatswain's pipe, the clank of the engines and the measured throb of the propeller, not to mention a smothered groan of unmistakable portent which now and then finds its way up through the open skylights.

Grouped under the bulwarks some of the Germans are chorusing in their own tongue—student staves and jolly Bacchanalian lays of the Rhineland—by no means in bad time or tune. A few passengers stand muffled in great-coats under the lee of the companion, already beginning to fraternise, and the fresh salt air speedily becomes tainted with whiffs of the soothing weed: others are sitting in the saloon writing as for dear life, in order to send a last line of farewell ere we put out from Plymouth to-morrow. But sea breezes have a notoriously soporific effect; the passengers slip off below one by one, and I am left the sole

occupant of the deck. The saloon lights are extinguished, then the cabin ones, and all is silent, save for the ceaseless clank of the engines, and a long drawn cry as the watch is relieved.

The bright red eye of a lighthouse flashes full upon us for a moment, as moving steadily round it sweeps the gloom with its sharply defined ray, and till far into the night I pace the quarter-deck, watching the black coastline as we plunge on through the phosphorus tipped waves. At last I go below, and divesting in a trice, stow myself into my appointed bunk, which, by the way, is a very comfortable one, and the first evening aboard ship is at an end.

Awaking, the vessel is motionless ; the beat of the screw, and the rocking and swaying are conspicuous by their absence, and the weaker brethren will have a few hours' respite from their agonies, for we are lying inside the Plymouth breakwater. I bethink me of having another hour or two on *terra firma*, but it is early yet : as luck will have it though, a fishing lugger is lying alongside all ready, and stepping on board her the sail is hoisted, and we slip along before a fresh breeze. The morning is singularly mild for the time of year, but there is every appearance of rain. We bowl along ; on the right the Stadden heights command the entrance to the Sound ; on the left the tree-fringed bluffs of

Mount Edgecumbe, and the little twin villages of Kingsand and Cawsand with their square church tower, nestling in a snug corner of the bay ; in front the roofs and spires of Plymouth, whither we are fast speeding. I land, and having ascertained the time of the ship's departure, proceed on my way.

Plymouth is a pleasant looking town enough, but no town, or country either, could present aught but a woful and depressing appearance under the steady downpour which promptly set in ; nor was that all, for the wind got up, and many a rainy gust tore round the street corners, to the imminent jeopardy of the unwary pedestrian's umbrella. In fact it was blowing half a gale by the time I stood upon the deck of the steam tug *Sir Francis Drake* at twelve o'clock—the latest hour by which passengers must be on board—so warned the Company's agent. But although twelve was the hour named for the departure of that useful craft, yet one o'clock still found her securely moored to the quay, for no ostensible reason, the mails being already shipped. It rained steadily and in torrents ; the sole shelter available, except the stifling hole of a cabin, was that afforded by the projecting parapet of the bridge, and I made the most of it, in common with a closely packed multitude. A large number of emigrants of the very roughest class crowded the deck, giving free vent to their

impatience, in terms savouring more of force than of nicety of diction; and enlivening the passing hour with songs, whose burden was the reverse of artistic or refining, interspersing the intervals with much Whitechapel talk. It is unpleasant, very, to be obliged to stand on end for any length of time in a cramped position, shivering under a scanty shelter, the slightest move in the hope of shifting your wearisome attitude being rewarded by the insinuation of a cold trickling down your neck. It is unpleasant, very, to find yourself wedged in amongst rather a ruffianly crowd which is bawling its jargon into your ears. But the traveller must look for unpleasantness as his daily portion, notwithstanding which I could not repress a growl of relief when, nearly two hours after coming on to the tug, the moorings were cast loose and we paddled off to the ship.

Although past the time at which we are advertised to sail, there seem no indications of a start, luncheon is going on below, and everything looks pretty much as usual: the newly embarked emigrants 'forrard' are jostling and cursing over their luggage, and I learn that we are to remain at anchor till the gale goes down, which means that there we shall be for the rest of that day, certainly all the next, and probably the day after that. However, it was of no use grumbling—there we

were and we must make the best of it. The short winter afternoon faded into night, and so far from the wind abating it blew with tenfold force ; in fact, lying in my bunk listening to the howling of the gale outside as it tore and whistled through the shrouds, I thought it might be rather a good thing than otherwise that we were riding quietly at anchor in a safe haven.

In the morning, a two masted sailing vessel was on the rocks under the Stadden cliffs, having been driven ashore during the night, so violent was the wind even in the Sound. There she lay, fast wedged, and we could see the lifeboat and a steam tug hovering about her during the greater part of the day. Our chance of a start was small, for it blew harder than ever, and we must make up our minds for another day of it with what philosophy we could. So we took things contentedly enough, watching the white jets of surf as a huge wave would strike the breakwater, and rebounding, rear itself up to a great height, to fall with a roar and a splash in a milky shower—and speculating as to what success was likely to attend the efforts made to float the ‘lame duck.’ Large gulls, driven in by the tempestuous weather, soared and wheeled beneath the grey angry sky in the gathering twilight. Companions in adversity had we, and plenty ; one of the Orient Company’s big Australian liners,

outward bound like ourselves, and two or three other large steamers. Smaller craft was there in abundance, lying at anchor all round, and when evening closed in, numerous mast lanterns cast their twinkling reflection upon the waters, while ever and anon as the driving scud cleared, the lights of the distant town would glow redly in the background; the bells striking the hour clanged forth, to be taken up by craft after craft, throughout the whole flotilla; dimly could one discern huge masses of sea, dashing over the breakwater by the ton, and the furious howling of the gale outside blended with the shrill ghostlike music of the whistling shrouds.

Morning broke bright and clear; during the night the gale had undergone a marked abatement, and it was reported that we should very soon up anchor. The big Australian was already on the move; by nine o'clock we had followed her example and were steaming out round the breakwater, and the former victims began to find out that they were not on their 'sea-legs' yet; that lying in smooth water is one thing, facing the remnant of a strong sou'-westerly gale another. It certainly was rather hard on these that breakfast should be deferred till we were well out of harbour; had they been set to face their dire enemy, fortified with a substantial feed, many a

pang might have been spared them. Some went so far as to hint that that august corporation, the Union Steamship Company (Limited), studied economy to an undue extent ; but great allowances must be made for people to whom life will be a sore and grievous burden for the next forty-eight hours, and who are aware of the same.

Although the wind has gone down, the sea has not, and is running mountains ; a stiff fresh breeze is blowing up Channel, and we bound along, throwing the spray in masses from our bows as we plunge and rise to the huge green rollers which tower up high overhead, as though about to thunder on the deck, and then, surging beneath the keel, rush off on the other side, curling their sharp crest into white foam, roaring and hissing in disappointed wrath. Sea birds are to be descried in all directions, from the large herring gull whose wings glisten in the sun as he wheels and darts to and fro, mingling his shrill voice with the whistling of the wind, to the pretty little ‘Mother Carey’s chickens’ of which several are steadily following astern, dropping to pick up whatever may chance to be thrown out of the cook’s galley. Now and then we meet a homeward bound ship standing up Channel under a spread of canvas, and a steamer may be seen ploughing on her course, a line of smoke drifting from her funnel like a dark plume.

We pass the two Eddystones—the old weather-beaten one, which has done such good service in its time, looking quite dwarfed and squat by the tall and tapering shape of the new—and the waves are dashing over their base. But the high coast headlands are getting more and more indistinct; presently their faint outline is just visible, then they fade altogether. So good-bye, Old England, for we have looked our last upon you, and now for the sunny South!

The passengers stand about in groups, or walk up and down, in which accomplishment, by the way, we have none of us yet attained perfection; generally it resolves itself into a tentative and gingerly endeavour to persuade ourselves and others that we are quite at home pacing the reeling deck at an angle of 45; in fact, that, if anything, we rather prefer it—but it won't do. Truly it is an amazing sight to contemplate two persons in their efforts to keep their feet under the circumstances; presently one staggers more violently than usual, loses his balance, spasmodically clutches his companion, and both go rolling into the scuppers. Whereat a great guffaw ascends from the lookers-on.

If you are of a sociable turn, it is not a bad plan to try and forget the attacks of the sea-demon in conversation; in short, not to think of him. Not that this always holds good, though: often

have I watched an unfortunate, forming one of a jovial group, and manfully battling with the dire qualms which surely and slowly are gaining the mastery. But it is of no use; paler and paler grows the unhappy one, till at last he beats a sudden and precipitate retreat. 'All up with him,' says some one, and the fun goes on as before. If any of my readers, on voyaging intent, are expecting to hear of a cure for sea-sickness in these pages they will be disappointed; I never knew a real one, though I have heard of many. But a preventive is better, and I have always found the following very simple one to answer. Firmly persuade yourself that nothing is further from your programme than that little excursion to the side of the ship. Once on board, take your meals as regularly as you would on shore; but, except for the purpose of taking them, do not go below: the fresh sea-breeze is a powerful revivifier, and the atmosphere 'tween decks, with the port holes closed the first two or three days of a passage, is enough to overturn the strongest. Never mind if it's cold; wrap up well, and walk about as much as possible, and don't go below at night till you are perfectly certain of going to sleep the moment you turn in. The great thing is to keep in the open air as much as possible. But I will get back to my narrative.

The following morning saw us well into the Bay of Biscay. It was cold and raw; the sky seemed to meet the seething plain of great tumbling leaden waves; a grey mist swept the surface, and heavy showers drove the few of us who had ventured upon deck under the lee of the companion, where we stood, trying to keep our footing, for the ship was rolling heavily, and the decks wet and slippery. A sudden and violent shock—something has given way; it seems to me only like a heavy sea striking one of the boats hanging in the davits. Then the bell in the engine-room sounds, and the vessel stops; the captain and quartermaster, with one or two of the officers, make their way aft. Meanwhile, the sensation—not to say alarm—has extended to the saloon passengers; the sea-sick ones discover that they are not nearly so anxious to go to the bottom as they supposed, but find their way up the companion stairs with wondrous celerity. ‘What is it?’ ‘What’s gone wrong?’ &c. &c., is heard in more or less apprehensive tones among the startled groups. I certainly had no idea how little it took to create a scare on board ship, for, in the present instance, neither has the shaft broken nor the propeller, nor have any of the port holes been staved in, but one of the steering chains has snapped nearly opposite where we were standing when the shock was first felt.

The after wheel is soon manned, while a *posse* of the crew is told off to repair the broken chain ; the engines are in motion again, and the good ship is driving along through the mist and spray, plunging over the restless watery plain, every beat of the screw carrying us further and further from Old England. However, it is not my intention to chronicle each day's events, but rather to give an insight of life on board an ocean-going steamer so towards evening of the fifth day after leaving Plymouth—four is the usual run, but ours being an intermediate boat does not hurry herself—we are standing in to Madeira, and skirt the rocky coast ; its cliffs glowing in the sunset beams. Our yards are braced, all is taut and clear, and, by the time we glide in and drop anchor in the roadstead of Funchal, the shadows of night have fallen upon land and water.

CHAPTER II.

Madeira—A noisy lot—Diving boys—Funchal—Pleasures of landing—
A bazaar afloat—Teneriffe—‘A life on the ocean wave’—Fire
practice—Church parade—The weekly press—Crossing the Line—
A callow Teuton—Some cheerful reflections—Theatricals—Table
Bay.

VERY refreshing to the eye, after five days of tumbling sea, is Madeira; its heights crowned with waving groves; its green slopes and luxuriant vegetation; the quaint old foreign looking town spreading along the edge of the bay, while dotted about on the slope above, many a roof and white sun-baked wall of a country villa peers through its thick masses of trees. Strange tropical plants mingle their bright plumage with trailing creepers which festoon the garden walls overhanging the blue waters, and a delightful balminess suggestive of citron groves and spice and *dolce far niente* pervades the air. In the present instance, however, we are not to see the island at its best, and our arrival after dark instead of by day is the subject of not a little growling among the passengers. But a brilliant moon goes far towards making up for

their fancied grievance, flooding sea and land with silver light.

Everyone who has visited Madeira will remember what excitement is caused in the aboriginal breast by the arrival of the mail steamer. Before the anchor was fairly down we were beset by a legion of boats bobbing like corks alongside of the big ship. Some were laden with wicker chairs and tables, others with all sorts of articles manufactured in the island—paper-knives, inlaid boxes, lace, filagree work—gimcrackery innumerable and indescribable. Then there were fruit boats piled up with baskets of oranges, bananas, loquots, &c. &c., and boats plying for hire; their occupants all screaming and jabbering, jostling and fighting to get nearest the ship. An aquatic pandemonium. Then there are boats full of half-naked boys anxious to dive for silver: coppers sink too rapidly, nor can they see them under water—I once threw in a handful of half-pence, but only two were found. Wonderfully quick are these amphibious urchins after a sixpence or a threepenny bit, catching it before it has sunk many feet. The competition, too, is keen; one will seize the coin almost from another's grasp, whereupon the disappointed youth will haply lie in wait for and duck his more fortunate rival on rising to the surface. Nor can this one elude his

relentless pursuer, who hardly allows him to get his head above water ; in fact, I have seen this carried to an extent that would suffice to drown the ordinary swimmer twice over. But it takes a great deal to drown a Madeira diving-boy.

Awful thieves are these aquatic pedlars. An arm through a port hole—should the stewards be unwary enough to leave one open, which they generally take good care not to do—as their boats toss alongside, and a blanket, bolster, coat, hat, anything seizable, speedily changes ownership. Owing to this proclivity a show is made of keeping them off the vessel, but there are too many of them ; the sturdy quartermaster's back turned, they climb up like monkeys, where there is scarcely fingerhold much less foothold, and the passengers, anxious to 'deal,' aid and abet them in so doing. I saw the quartermaster drive one fellow down the side as if repulsing a boarding party, and looked over expecting to see him in the water. Not a bit of it ; there he was, scrambling quietly but rapidly into his boat, whence he hurled a string of Portuguese invective at the contemptuous tar. Everyone buys a wicker chair at Madeira ; I do likewise, not for the above reason, but that the possession of the said article of furniture adds materially to one's comfort during the voyage, for you can't drag the

ship benches and plant them at will about the deck. Therefore, watching my opportunity—for our captain has a prejudice against deck chairs, and hitherto no vendors thereof have been allowed on board—I proceed to drive a bargain over the stern of the vessel. After some haggling—no one ever yet effected a deal with a native of Madeira without haggling—my contraband seat is handed up, and I take steps for securing the same.

But we must begin to think about landing, and as the ship will not leave till nearly midnight there is time to go ashore and look about a little. Our party is made up and we have no difficulty in getting a boat, each and all being extremely anxious to have the pleasure of carrying us. So, depositing ourselves in the stern sheets we tell the fellows to shove off, which they seem not to see the force of doing just yet, hoping to get some more ‘fares.’ This we object to strongly, there being as many of us as the boat will hold—twice are we nearly capsized, and amid much frantic gesticulation, and yelling and jabbering enough to deafen one, we fight clear of the crowd and are pulling for the beach. I have often wondered that casualties are not of frequent occurrence on these occasions; everyone does his level best to get into the boat at once, specially

the rougher sort from 'farrard,' jostling and crowding to any extent—and all this on the narrow gangway stair. The rascally boatmen, moreover, are only too eager to carry as many as possible, quite irrespective of any considerations of safety. We land, and pushing through the importunate host of loafers on the beach, take our way up the town.

A queer old place is Funchal, with its narrow stone-paved streets, and ugly but picturesque buildings. . Among these is the Cathedral; I mean it comes under the former adjective, for it certainly is not picturesque. A visit to it is a game hardly worth the candle, and on the steps you have to run the gauntlet of a crowd of hapless fellow mortals, clamorously soliciting alms by virtue of sundry loathsome afflictions which they eagerly thrust on your notice. No wheels rumble through the steep, narrow streets; rough, heavy sleds drawn by oxen being the ordinary mode of conveyance. The fruit market is well worth a visit, and, if time allows, you may make an expedition to the Convent, whose white walls, far up the hill, you saw from the ship. There it is that the lace is made which they were pestering you on board to buy, and a fine view of the town and bay is obtainable.

On this occasion we do none of these things,

but make our way to the English hotel ; where, as we sit enjoying our cigars in the garden, five nights after leaving the chill November winds and fogs, the air still and balmy, and a glorious moon silvering the leaves overhead, it occurs to me that our evening arrival is anything but subject matter for a grievance. Time passes, and we must get on board again, so picking up some of our party on the way, we make for the beach : once more we have to run the gauntlet of a vociferous and ill-smelling crowd, but there are plenty of us, and we are afloat again without any trouble. Gruesome tales are told of stray travellers at night being heavily black-mailed before suffered to embark, or belated ones having to pay through the nose ere their scoundrels of boatmen would take them on board. I can't say that this kind of thing has ever come within my actual experience—and I have landed and come off again at night and alone ; yet it is not altogether a safe experiment. But in the present instance we are more than strong enough to hold our own.

On our return we found that the prohibition had been removed, and the amphibious hawkers had accordingly opened out and displayed their wares. Articles of fancy work fearfully and wonderfully made, Madeira lace, walking sticks,

photographs, queer little devices in shells, filagree work, knicknacks of every description, lie spread out on the deck, or arranged about on seats and skylights. The whole afterpart of the ship is crowded; limits of classification are in abeyance, and the emigrant jostles the saloon passenger, vying with him in his bargaining: the Portuguese are bawling out their stock in trade, jabbering and haggling with their customers, and the row is simply deafening. The red gleam of the lanterns falls upon a bustling throng, lighting up many an eager face; from that of a rough specimen from 'forrard' bargaining for a curiously wrought gold (?) ring, to that of the lady passenger who has at last secured the coveted piece of lace upon her own terms. Yonder a group is examining with the air of connoisseurs sundry grey parrots, whose conversational merits their olive-skinned proprietors are extolling with a volubility not unworthy of the objectionable birds themselves.

But the contents of the impromptu booths become smaller and beautifully less, the howling of their owners decreasing in proportion; trade hangs fire, and moreover it is midnight, and time to weigh anchor. The shore bell rings, and the vivacious Portuguese hurriedly pack up their traps and bundle into the boats, to retire upon

their gains and await the arrival of the next mail. The steam pipe roars; the water is churned into white foam astern as the big ship swings round to her cable, which is fast being wound in. The anchor is up, and we glide away from the roadstead; the revolution of the screw settles into a rapid steady beat; we stand on our southward course over the moonlit sea, and by morning, Madeira, with its rich verdure and picturesque heights, its quaint town and clamorous aborigines, has sunk from sight beneath the horizon.

Teneriffe is less than twenty-four hours' run from Madeira, and of course the next thing is to look out for the famous Peak: at length a clear cut outline looms through a mass of dark cloud, and there it is, rearing up 13,000 feet sheer out of the sea. It seems doubtful whether we shall get a good view, but towards evening the clouds melt away, and we pass beneath; the lofty snow-capped summit, gleaming red in the rays of the setting sun, towers to the sky. I suppose there is no mountain in the world which affords such a view of uninterrupted height; even the stupendous peaks of the Himalayas are surrounded by others in gradation. But Teneriffe, starting abruptly from the sea, labours under no such scenic disadvantage; reigning in solitary stateliness over the vast ocean plain. I have

seen it white with snow nearly to the base, set in the surrounding expanse of blue water ; to-day as we pass there is only enough of snow on the summit to convey an idea of its height.

Two hours later I stood on deck ; the sea was perfectly calm, and the great ship standing on her way steadily as a rock ; a golden moon hung overhead, and the liquid surface seemed all on fire. A cloud had enshrouded the mighty Peak, and as we glided between it and the surrounding islands, whose dark shapes wrapped in shadowy gloom stood weirdly out into the moonlit waters, it seemed as if we were vogueing on an enchanted sea.

And now Teneriffe is left behind, each day becomes more deliciously warm, the sea is as calm as a lake, and everyone has settled down into the usual routine of life on board ship, which, though monotonous, is not without a certain charm of its own. For under no other circumstances whatever do you feel so thoroughly justified in taking life easily. You get up when you like, and go to bed when you like ; you sit and read under the awning in the heat of the day, you take quarter-deck walks and smoke your cheroot in the cool of eve, and you enter with zest into the hundred-and-one trifles which, so insignificant in themselves, assume quite an

importance for the time being. The 'speaking' of a passing vessel, and sweepstake on the daily speed of your own, are events ; the lively interest you take in so commonplace an occurrence as the gambols of a shoal of porpoises surprises you when you come to look back upon it. If fortunate in your fellow voyagers, you interchange ideas on most subjects under heaven. In fact you feel that you are not only allowed, but even expected, to take life very easily, and the consumption of the lightest of light literature and manifold cigars become actions not merely permissible but positively meritorious.

So it is with us. Even the frailest of sea-sick mortals has now forgotten the onslaughts of the terrible demon as we glide smoothly along through the still waters which wear the blue-green transparency of tropical latitudes. Windsails carry draughts of refreshing air down through the skylights, and light clothing has become the correct thing.

The middle of the morning. It is already warm enough to be uncomfortable, save within the shade, but an awning covers the length of the quarter-deck. The passengers sit and lie about in various attitudes of listless ease ; in many a hand may be descried a most reprehensible-looking 'yellow-back.' Others are chatting or indulging in a mild game of which

pencils and paper form the chief ingredients. Here and there a few ladies with some sort of work in hand strive hard to appear industrious. Now and then a rush is made for the side to look at a shoal of 'springers,' or a cloud of silvery flying-fish skimming bird-like along the blue surface, which albeit so still and placid, is teeming with life in its quiet depths. Or perhaps the dark triangular fin of a shark glides along, warning of the double danger of falling into those treacherous seas. Yonder, abaft the line of demarcation—for a space of a few feet in the stern has been turned into an open-air smoking-room—sits a group of Germans, each at the end of a long pipe, stolidly playing cards; while on the other side of the quarter-deck a game of 'bull,' that mildest of ship sports, is going on.

Prominent among all is the burly form of our jovial skipper passing from group to group, his bearded face beaming with merriment as, having fired off a parting joke, he moves on to give the benefit of it to a fresh batch. Eight bells strike; the officers come aft and make their reports, and the captain joins them as, sextant in hand, they take the latitude. The more energetic of the passengers move towards the companion stairs to ascertain the run during the last twenty-four hours, which is posted up daily at twelve o'clock. Presently the

luncheon bell rings and all make for the saloon, which wears a very different appearance to when we last saw it. The seats are all occupied, the 'fiddles' are conspicuous by their absence, and we do not have to cling to the banisters, then to the pillars of the saloon, as we spasmodically rush to our places. No periodical smash of glass or crockery, as an unpractised steward cannons against his colleague in the passage, now makes itself heard. No longer are the fronts of our waistcoats anointed by our soup in our acrobatic efforts to consume the same, nor do the contents of the mustard pot and bitter beer mingle on the tablecloth to pour their united forces into our lap. None of these things happen now, they are among events of the past (let us hope); to-day, at any rate, we may absorb our soup in legitimate fashion, and contemplate the proximity of Colman to Bass with calm placidity, feeling certain that each will keep within due bounds. Everyone is festive enough, and apparently well contented with his or her lot in life; corks are popping, conversation and laughter flow freely, as also do iced claret and soda water, not to mention other beverages agreeable to tropical climes. At the end of luncheon the fire-bell rings. We who have been at sea before are accustomed to it, in fact can generally tell within a day when to expect it; the others have been

warned, yet I think I can detect just a shade of momentary scare on one or two faces, but only momentary. Stewards skurry out of the saloon with blankets in their hands, and we follow them to see the fire parade. The crew tumbles up, the donkey engine is in full swing, and hoses are vigorously making play upon the impassive face of old ocean. Every man is in his place, from the commander to the cook's boy; the boats' crews, each under its appointed officer, are at their boats, in which at the word of command some of them take their places. Here the fire practice usually ends; the shrill whistle of the boatswain's pipe rings out above the clank of the donkey engine and the hissing of the jets of water, the hoses are unscrewed, the ship's company is piped down, and all is quiet as before. These practices are held once a week, generally on Saturday.

Another great institution on board is the Sunday parade, when all assemble on the quarter-deck except those actually on duty. There are the captain and officers in gala uniform, together with the surgeon and engineers; the crew, men and boys, in their smart blue jackets and snowy trousers; stewards and firemen, the pallid faces of these last showing in marked contrast to the healthy brown complexions of the rest of the ship's company. The muster is called, and all answer to

their names ; then preparations are made for Divine service. It is a lovely morning ; the extra seats with which the quarter-deck is furnished are soon filled, many of the second class passengers and emigrants turning out in their smartest attire, and there is quite a large congregation. A passenger acts as organist at the piano, which has been hoisted on deck for the occasion, and at an improvised rostrum draped in the Union Jack, the captain officiates, reading the office of Morning Prayer and Litany, together with some prayers for use at sea, in a clear ringing voice. A volunteer choir groups round the piano, and the Canticles and several hymns are sung ; in fact, the service is very hearty and by no means a bad specimen of an English service on board an English ship. Our congregation joins lustily in the hymns, and the familiar strains sound forth over the calm waters.

It is the rule on board the Union Company's vessels to hold service every Sunday morning. Of course any number of persons are at liberty to hold it at other times, provided the arrangements do not interfere with those of the ship, but only the morning service is obligatory. If there is a clergyman of the Church of England on board he is almost invariably asked to officiate ; should there not be one, however, the captain does so himself. No difficulty is placed in the way of

ministers of other denominations holding services for their co-religionists, provided they do not clash with the due performance of the recognised one ; and, whatever may be thought of this arrangement, it appears to work well

Everyone is reconciled to life on board, and those who at first were inclined to growl because we would make the passage in twenty-three instead of nineteen days, have subsided, and now say they didn't care on their own account, but only because it seemed a pity that one of the Company's best boats should not make one of the best passages. Such disinterestedness who could find it in their hearts to doubt ? Time is got through, all doing their best to make it pass pleasantly ; there are games and races on deck in the cool part of the day, singing in the saloon in the evening, and sometimes the piano is hoisted up and the decks cleared for a dance. One enterprising wight starts a weekly newspaper with a fantastic title, which speedily becomes popular, judging from the faces of each group which may be seen discussing its contents, no less than from the abundant inquiry as to the next issue. News of the week and leading articles, correspondence and answers to queries, and advertisements—even a 'poet's corner.' It becomes quite an institution. Another worthy of artistic turn deems it his mission to portray all and

each of us as we sit, stand, or lie about the deck. This feat is generally performed unknown to the subject thereof, who is taken off in every attitude, whether in the act of throwing a quoit, singing a song, or even while indulging in an afternoon siesta. But I am bound to say that with one or two exceptions the representations bear to the originals not the slightest resemblance whatever. Theatricals are talked of—very much so; unlike most things much talked of, however, they are destined to become a fact, and bold spirits may be seen book in hand striving to get up their parts, with a determination the more laudable by reason of the state of the thermometer. Which thermometer daily warns that we are fast approaching the Equator.

The traditional festivity observed on crossing 'the line,' with which Captain Marryat's delightful works have done so much to familiarise non-seagoers, is becoming a thing of the past; in fact, as far as passenger steamers are concerned, it may be said to have so become already. In former years I once saw Neptune hold his court with all due and accredited state on board a mail steamer, and a very tidy sort of a row was the result; but the practice has now been done away with, and rightly, so in this instance the merrier spirits had to rest content with whatever

fun could be got out of the occasion. Of course the venerable jest of sticking a hair across the lens of a telescope and inviting the most gullible of our co-voyagers to inspect 'the line' was resorted to; and some of the Germans having persuaded one of their number—a long-legged *Æsculapius*—that Neptune would be visible that night, proceeded to devise and carry out a mild practical joke at the expense of their credulous compatriot. Reasonable time having been allowed the victim to undress, a bucket of water was held in readiness above his cabin window; something fastened to a piece of string and lowered over the side was made to tap against the same, which opened, and a head protruded, its owner expecting to behold Neptune in all his glory. The contents of the bucket, and the delighted guffaws of his countrymen, however, promptly brought home to the mind of the unsuspecting Teuton that the whole affair was a mistake, and the court of the scaly monarch a snare and a delusion; for ere long he emerged from the companion and proceeded to 'chevvy' his persecutors all over the ship. By which it will be seen that even gentlemen from 'Das Vaterland' can wax playful on the high seas.

But we are spared the hottest of equatorial weather, and the nights are not only tolerable

but even enjoyable; so we partly turn them into day, and sit on deck into the small hours, chatting and distilling the fragrant weed. And the great ship stands steadily on over the lonely moonlit sea, a broad path of livid phosphorescence marking her track, straight as an arrow, far astern— isolated, cut off from the world, with her crowded human freight; alone, the vast silent plain stretching around dim and boundless. A sudden leak, an explosion, a fire—that word which at sea carries tenfold terror in its four simple letters—and where are we? What of the hundreds so calmly sleeping below? We are added to the list of ‘missing,’ the vast mysterious deep keeps its own counsel, and our fate remains for ever unsolved, unless perhaps a charred fragment of wreckage or a few starving waifs are picked up to tell the tale of awe. I suppose some such thoughts as these must from time to time enter into the calculations of every reflective traveller as he paces the deserted deck at midnight, or, leaning over the rudder, gazes into the brilliancy of phosphorescent light beneath, now flashing in fitful gleams, now showering out clusters of bright floating stars as the ever-revolving screw cleaves the luminous waters.

But to turn to livelier themes. I said that theatricals were in process of elaboration, and

by the time everybody knows his or her part fairly, an evening is fixed upon. Posters of portentous dimensions and whimsical compilation are struck off, and at the appointed time a tolerably full 'house' has assembled. A stage has been erected against the companion; fronting this are seats placed all down the quarter-deck, which, being shut in with canvas on the open sides of the awning, has quite the appearance of a large marquee. Flags of all sorts are hung around, their bright colours glowing in the light of the large ship lanterns. The front seats are reserved for first class passengers, and by the time the curtain draws up and the jovial skipper appears on the stage to read the prologue, the quarter-deck is crowded, for on these occasions the passengers from 'forrard' receive a general invitation to witness the performance. Plays on board ship are always of the light comedy order, and ours was no exception; the acting was spirited, and evoked roars of merriment. What if one or two of the performers might be seen rolling their eyes rather frequently and despairingly in the direction of the prompter's box? What though that functionary—none other than our blithe commander—could be discerned by a select few through a chink in the curtains,

shaking with suppressed laughter to such an extent as to be totally incapable of responding to the mute appeal? What mattered it that little hitches of this kind did occur—they only added to the fun.

Sometimes the monotony of the voyage would be broken by the speaking of a passing steamer, either one of our own or of the rival Company; for we are far out of the beat of sailing vessels, and have old Ocean quite to ourselves. The days pass in their ordinary groove as we are nearing the end of the voyage; we have read all our own books and all our neighbours' too; the last number of the newspaper has been issued, and those who are going to leave the vessel at Cape Town are thinking of packing up. So the twenty-third morning after starting from Plymouth, we wake to find that the accustomed throb of the propeller has ceased, and to miss the vibration of the engines. We are lying in Table Bay: yonder the masts of the shipping in the docks make an effective foreground to the town, behind which, Table Mountain rears its wall of sheer rock to a height of 5,000 feet; on the right is the pyramid-like Lion's Head, on the left the distant Paarl mountains, whose purple cones loom through the haze. It is a splendid morning, not a cloud in the sky; and as we look out over

the blue bay dotted with Malay fishing boats, we gaze upon a scene of fair beauty very refreshing to the eye after three weeks of boundless sea.

At length the tide is high enough to admit of entrance, so we up anchor and steam quietly into dock.

CHAPTER III.

Cape Town—A motley crowd—An inviting coast—Port Elizabeth—
Crossing a 'Bar'—East London—A Kaffrarian railway—St. John's
River.

EVERYONE arriving at Cape Town, even though not for the first time, will scarcely fail to be struck—as the steamer slowly makes her way through the narrow entrance of the harbour—with the eager crowd upon the jetty, impelled thither by as many motives as there are elements in the throng. There is the brisk merchant in his pith helmet and sweeping puggaree. The senator in orthodox white chimney-pot donned by virtue of his office, but whose sunburnt countenance and loosely made clothes proclaim him far more at home on some up-country sheep or ostrich farm, rising with the sun and turning in not long after the going down of the same, than speechifying and being speechified to in Council or Assembly by night, and wandering rather forlornly about the city by day. There are idlers brought together by no other motive than a ready pretext for whiling away an

hour in witnessing the arrival of the English mail. Then there is a sprinkling of persons who have come to meet friends or relatives. Yellow skinned Malays are also there in plenty, their picturesque Oriental dresses lending colour to the diversely arrayed throng. Darker groups also—Slaves,¹ Mozambique negroes, and Kafirs from the Eastern frontier, stand and squat about in the background. The decks are piled up with luggage; those about to land are all eager to do so, though not without a sneaking regret at leaving the old ship which has brought them safely over, and there is no end of hand-shaking and good-byes as people are met by their friends, or are bid farewell to by their fellow-passengers. The Malay cab-drivers drawn up in line are yelling for fares, and a crowd of loafers of every shade and colour is clamouring for the privilege of carrying luggage which no one wants carried. I wait till the excitement abates, and hailing a hansom, drive quietly up into the town, the central part of which is distant nearly two miles from the docks.

Cape Town is by no means an agreeable city, the beauty of its surroundings notwithstanding. No one lives in it who can possibly live out of it;

¹ The people emancipated from serfdom to the Dutch in the earlier days of the Colony are still so-called. They are of St. Helena extraction.

Green Point, Mowbray, Wynberg, Constantia, and other pleasant suburban retreats containing the residences of the principal merchants and Government officials, who come in by rail to their daily avocations. Its streets are unpaved and very dusty; in fact, given a fair breeze, and the whole place is enveloped in clouds of pungent red dust, which, tearing round corners, sweep over the unwary pedestrian, speedily reducing him to a state of helpless and frantic blindness. And there are no side pavements. Should the freshly caught Briton flatter himself that he has got upon one, before he has progressed many yards he will find it necessary either to retrace his confiding steps, or to take a jump of perhaps five feet, for he is on the 'stoep' of a house, which 'stoeps' line the sides of the street where would be pavements in any but a Dutch town. Then, too, Cape Town is literally the abode of 'ancient and fishlike smells'—I will hardly go so far as to say as many as there are streets in the town, but that there is an exceeding great variety to be encountered at every turn I can unhesitatingly vouch. Among the advantages of the place there are good shops, and a railway station with frequent trains, by which you may make an expedition to the wine growing neighbourhood or wherever your wandering fancy may tend. Tram cars run along the principal

thoroughfares, and hansom cabs are plentiful, their drivers, mostly Malays, though not so disinclined to overreach the new importation as one might wish, would yet compare very favourably with the too often surly, insolent ruffians of the London cab-stand. There is a good library and a fair museum; a theatre and skating rink, which last has, I believe, shared the fate of its kind; the Botanical Gardens are pretty and well kept, and form a pleasant lounge of an afternoon. And there is an ugly Cathedral which, notwithstanding its discouraging exterior, has services equal in musical proficiency to most cathedrals in Britain. Hotel accommodation, by the way, is very bad—a bedroom to yourself being, as a rule, out of the question; in fact, you are in luck's way if not herded in with three or four other persons. On the frontier one may look for that sort of thing, and accept the situation with traveller's equanimity; but in the metropolis of South Africa one hardly expects to be 'stabled.'

In short, Cape Town requires all its pleasant surroundings to redeem it from being one of the most unattractive places on the face of the earth. Hardly a handsome building is to be met with—all is ugly, Dutch, and squat; and when our allotted two days have fled, and we are steaming out of the harbour, I, for one, am not loud in my regrets

On we go, pitching head to the tumbling seas—now that we have passed the ‘Cape of Storms,’ good-bye to the motionless calm of the tropics—giving a wide berth to the line of rugged cliffs on our lee, for many a treacherous sunken reef lies there. Yonder, in the gloaming, clouds of whitewinged gulls are circling about the frowning peak of Cape Hangklip and the surf breaks with dull roar among the scarce hidden reefs at its base. A desolate ironbound coast On—past Danger Point and Quoin Point, the scene of the striking of the ill-fated *Teuton*,¹ and evening has sunk into the darkness of night before the low-lying light of Agulhas gleams out over the sea.

Another day’s run, and we are at anchor in Algoa Bay, entering late at night. But in the morning there is no prospect of our getting away soon, for it is Christmas Eve: the lightermen and beach-hands strike work early in the day, and not half the cargo is landed yet. There is no help for it; work they will not, so all that remains is to take things quietly, and to make up our minds to spend Christmas on board, or go ashore and do the same.

Port Elizabeth, the chief mercantile town of the Eastern Province, though occupying an unin-

¹ The *Teuton* struck on a rock near Quoin Point, and foundered off Cape Hangklip, in August 1881, over 260 persons perishing.

viting situation on a flat, dreary shore, at once strikes the traveller as an improvement on the metropolis in most respects. Large and substantial buildings grace the town ; you may walk down the principal thoroughfares without unpleasant thoughts of typhoid intruding themselves, and the place gives you the idea of being altogether smarter and more go-ahead than its western neighbour. Here the Dutch element is in the minority, for Port Elizabeth is a town of English creation ; but the German population is large and fast increasing. I believe I am right in saying that besides many of the principal merchants, the majority of clerks and employés in mercantile houses and stores are Germans ; the management of the hotels is mostly in German hands, and the German club is every whit as pretentious as its British neighbour. I can vouch for it that you hear nearly as much German spoken in Port Elizabeth as English, and the arrival of every mail steamer floods the place with fresh Teutons.

A thoroughly busy town is the Liverpool of the Eastern Province, as its burghesses love to style it. Besides four or five mail steamers generally anchored in the bay, there are plenty of sailing vessels discharging cargo, and the beach is alive with hundreds of black fellows wading out through the surf to carry ashore the contents of the lighters

as they come in. During the wool season strings of waggons piled high with their huge loads may be seen wending along the streets, the whips of the drivers cracking like rifle shots over the toiling spans. In front of the stores bales of wool lie in hundreds, all being marked and got under cover, while the transport waggons are thick about the streets, the oxen standing or lying down in their yokes. Here and there is a burly frontiersman, Dutch or English, who, scorning the (in his eyes) effeminate fashions of towns, strides along in all the glory of wideawake and corduroy, a ‘sjambok’¹ dangling from his hirsute wrist. But everywhere dust and scuffle, everyone busy—Kafir and Malay, Jew and Gentile.

There is a terminus at Port Elizabeth with a couple of different lines of rail, by which you may either make an expedition to Grahamstown, the ‘City of the Settlers’—far and away the prettiest town in the Eastern Province—or you may run out to Cradock or Graaff Reinet and inspect the Boers and the boundless karoo; but that will take time.

Not so very long ago landing was accomplished in Algoa Bay decidedly under difficulties—as also was embarkation; you were bundled with your luggage into a whale boat, and had to pay pretty

¹ A rhinoceros hide whip, suspended to the wrist by a thong.

nearly anything the boatmen chose to ask for the privilege. Now, all is changed ; steam launches ply backwards and forwards, and the competition is keen.

Our prognostications were realised : not until the evening of the second day after Christmas did we make a start, anchoring the following morning in the roadstead of East London. And here I am to leave the ship, for I intend remaining a few days at that rising port before proceeding on to Natal. Rather more than a month has gone by since I first climbed on board at Southampton, and now that I 'shin' down the side for the last time, it is with an absurd and sneaking sensation of regret. As the steam launch pushes off, I cannot help thinking of my last landing at this progressive port. Then, it was a case of crouching down among a score of navvies in the stern of a surf-boat, hardly able to move for fear of one's head coming in contact with the hawser. A huge green wall of water towered overhead, and—swish!—were we in the boat or in the sea? Before we had time to take breath, a second roller curled and broke over us with like result ; another, and another, as we bumped two or three times on the bar, and then rode smoothly into the mouth of the river. My friends the navvies spouted forth salt water mingled with blasphemy, and we landed. In fact, I was

literally thrown up on the shores of South Africa without a dry stitch on me. Now, however, it is a very different story ; the little steam launch rides the rollers like a duck, her screw whirling like the cowl of a chimney ; not a drop of water reaches us as we sit crowded on her well-raised deck, and by the time we are bowling up the broad river towards the Customs wharf, some of my fellow-travellers think that crossing the redoubted ' bar ' is but a poor affair after all. But *tempora mutantur*.

East London is a go-ahead place. Not many years ago a very bad ' hotel ' and a few German shanties were the sole habitations on the east bank of the Buffalo where is now Panmure, which comprises the railway station and all the principal places of business. The newness of the tenements and the unfinished state of the streets bear witness to the recent growth of the place ; but building is going on briskly, and the town increasing in size and standing. It is the port of British Kaffraria, but like most South African ports, the ' bar ' formed by the shallowness of the river and the constant silting up of the sand, is an effectual impediment to it ever possessing a good harbour. The roadstead, too, is an unsafe one, and, during the south-westerly gales, Heaven help the vessel that cannot make a wide offing, for she will inevitably be

driven on the rocks and broken up among the tremendous surf, which beats with terrific force upon this dangerous coast.

I mentioned a railway at East London. Now a Kaffrarian train is not a rapid means of locomotion; nevertheless it is infinitely preferable to that detestable structure, the old passenger-cart, which erewhile hammered you about the country from place to place, if haply it did not pitch you out and break your neck on the way. Railway speed hardly averages fifteen miles per hour, but then you do not have long to wait at the side stations. Many of these consist of a mere roof and platform in the middle of the 'veldt';¹ you tell the guard beforehand where you want to get down, and he stops the train at that particular place. If you want to catch a train at one of these sidings you simply stand on the platform and hail it as you would a tram car. As the line is unfenced and cattle frequently stray thereon, the engines are provided with 'cow-catchers,' with the result that, in many instances, it is 'bad for the coo.' Nor is the speed regular, for the train will crawl up a long acclivity, hand over hand as it were, and tear down the other side at breakneck pace—for all the world like bicycle riding.

¹ 'Veldt' in South African parlance is ground uncultivated and unenclosed. Bushy or open, stony or smooth, matters not; if unreclaimed it is all 'veldt.'

Curious are some of the idiosyncrasies which characterise the Union Company's dealings in the embarkation of passengers at East London. I found that in addition to the regular fare to Durban, which was high enough, I was expected to pay 10s. for being put on board ship ; pretty much as if on hailing a cab the driver were to demand an extra 6*d.* for the use of the step : and whereas the intending passenger pays 10s. for his transport over the bar, anyone going out to the ship and back for his own amusement is only charged 5*s.* A rule of thumb which the uninitiated can hardly aspire to fathom. Anyhow I find myself on board a coasting steamer one morning, *en route* for Durban.

It is a beautiful day, and the sea is calm as a millpond as we skirt the Kaffrarian shore ; on, past the Kei mouth and the fantastic ' Hole in the Wall,' a sudden break in a line of perpendicular rock ; fair to the eye are the green wooded heights of Pondoland sleeping in the afternoon haze, but the sun has set by the time we pass the mouth of the St. John's River, whose frowning portals of lofty cliff are all the more imposing for being seen in the gathering gloom of evening. In the morning I find we are running close in to the Natal coast. It is like going up a river ; the greensward slopes down to the water's edge—here and there a sugar planta-

tion with its low thatched dwellings surrounded by mango trees and tall bamboo; but not until midday do we round the Bluff and Durban lies spread out in front like a panorama. The town on the edge of the broad land-locked bay; on the one hand the high wooded 'Berea,' dotted with roofs nestling among the luxuriant growth, on the other the bold Bluff with its tapering lighthouse. A forest of masts belonging to the shipping small enough to cross the bar, bristled just inside the entrance, while the larger vessels lay at anchor in the wide roadstead.

We watched the tug come off, fondly hoping we should be enabled to land. Not a bit of it. She took the mails on board, but, for some occult reason, no passengers or luggage, and went her way; and although we dropped anchor shortly after twelve, it was not until late in the afternoon that the Company condescended to land us.

CHAPTER IV.

Durban—The Berea and Bay—‘Ramsammy’—Musquitoes—A mild practical joke—Pieter Maritzburg—St. Saviour’s Cathedral—Bishop Colenso—Native idea of punctuality.

A LARGE and busy place is Durban. On arrival something seems at once to strike me as different to any of the ports I have already touched at : it is warmer, and there is a tropical character about everything, from the atmosphere to the abundant vegetation flourishing in the gardens and even in the streets. The business part of the town is about two miles from the ‘Point,’ where you land, but its straggling outskirts reach right down to the sea. No strings of heavy ox-waggons rumble through the broad streets, the wheel transport being done by the neater trolly, and the railway station is in the centre of the town. There are tram cars running between the upper end and the Point, and an omnibus service to the Berea, where many of the wealthier Durbanites reside, having their places of business in the town. Plenty of life and stir is there in the streets ; the picturesque dresses of the coolies lend

colour to the variously clad throng of humanity moving to and fro, of which the Indian element forms no small part, for 'Ramsammy' is quite an institution in Natal. Here and there may be seen a tall head-ringed native from some up-country kraal, stalking disdainfully along, his kerries over his shoulder, and a scanty ragged shirt donned for the occasion flapping about his thighs as he strides on, hardly noticing the red and yellow groups of gaudily clad Orientals—turbaned men and ear-and-nose-bangled women. Equestrians are plentiful, and white-coated and pith-helmeted sons of the soil, mounted and on foot, are moving about on their respective avocations.

From the Berea you get a good bird's-eye view of the town, with the broad bay and the Bluff and its lighthouse beyond; seawards the vessels are tossing at their anchorage, and you can make out the white line of breakers on the bar. A pleasant walk is the road along the top of the Berea, shaded as it is by the remains of a virgin forest. Tall trees issue from a mass of thick undergrowth, and, in tangled network, monkey creepers twine from the branches of the wild fig and acacia. Now a break affords a view of the sea, and here and there, half hidden among the tropical foliage of their gardens, stand the bungalow-like houses of the townspeople, who certainly show some taste in the

choice of so pleasant and airy a retreat. Not long ago elephants crashed through the jungle on the Berea, troops of monkeys disported themselves among the tree-tops, and the roar of the lion and the howl of the hyæna mingled in nightly concert. Now it has been partially cleared and built upon, forming a favourite suburb of the town.

Very pleasant it is in the cool of the evening to cross over to the Bluff or to row about the bay and among the islands. Wooded hills close in the view to landward, casting their shadows into the glassy waters. A few boats are gliding to and fro, their occupants, like yourself, enjoying the coolness. Yonder the smooth lawns slope to the water's edge, which is fringed with the drooping boughs of many trees.

A decidedly pleasant place is Durban, yet there are two things that would probably cause discomfort to a new arrival—heat and mosquitoes. The former I did not mind, the latter I emphatically did. The Durban mosquito is eminently a respecter of persons, for he always attaches himself to the latest importation. He is objectionable enough in the daytime, but at night he is to be seen—and felt—at his worst. Of course your bed is provided with a mosquito curtain, and you flatter yourself that you will enjoy a respite accordingly. Perhaps you will—and I sincerely hope you will. But it may be

that your gauzy protection has sprung a leak, so small that you fail to notice it ; your voracious foe, however, does not so fail, and you wake in the night with a confused sensation of being devoured alive. You are ready to swear that there wasn't a ghost of a musquito anywhere near your curtain when you tucked it round so carefully, nor was there—yet now the unprincipled insect is sounding his war trumpet within two inches of your ear. You make frantic 'dabs' at him in the darkness. Not a bit of use ; just as you begin to congratulate yourself upon his capture the hideous trumpet brays out louder and more defiant than ever. Peradventure you use strong language (*anything* is excusable under musquito provocation) and lighting the candle proceed to hunt the persecutor of your midnight peace, who, however, knows 'a trick worth two o' that,' and mockingly sails away to a dim and exalted corner of the room. You give it up as a bad job, and drawing down your curtain put out the light and turn over, but not to sleep—oh no,—to get through the small hours rending your tortured carcase and wishing to Heaven it was morning and—tub time.

Yes, Durban is a pleasant place, but its musquitoes are open to objection.

The aspect of the coast country in Natal is more Indian than South African. The damp enervating heat, the exuberant vegetation, the trees and plants of tropical growth, from the mango and banana to the tall waving bamboo, and the all-pervading presence of 'Ramsammy.' All the agricultural and outdoor work is done by coolies. On the sugar plantations and in the mills Indians are employed. Instead of the beehive hut of the aboriginal you come upon the low, thatched shanty embowered in banana trees, standing in a patch of garden ground where its gaudily clad and turbaned proprietor may be seen assiduously digging, for he is great at cultivation. In fact the fruit and vegetable market of Durban is almost entirely in Indian hands, and you could imagine yourself in an Eastern bazaar as you stroll through its shadowy precincts, a delusion which at all events would not be dispelled by the names depicted over the different stalls where sit the various owners of such euphonious appellations as 'Moonee Sammy' or 'Rhamsetjee Baruckjee,' with their bangled and nose-ringed better halves, presiding over an array of loquots and bananas, mangoes and pines, not to mention bottles of mysterious-looking compounds.

Go where you will, you meet 'Ramsammy'; as hotel or club servant he is in great request, and in private houses. Indian signalmen hold up their

green flags along the railway lines, and the open trucks which do duty for third-class carriages are crowded with chattering coolies. Colonists are to be met with who look upon the importation of these people in such numbers—the Indian population is estimated at nearly 20,000—as not an unmixed good. But whereas the aboriginal of Natal works when and where he thinks fit, just as much or just as little as he pleases and no more, coolie labour is always obtainable.

Railways in Natal, like those in the Cape Colony, are in Government hands instead of being worked by companies; that from Durban to Maritzburg had then been not long completed; it is very winding, with a gradual ascent inland. A few days before my transit along it, some individual of a philanthropic turn of mind had picked out a place where the line made a sharp curve round a hollow formed by the steep sides of two hills, a sheer drop of some hundreds of feet beneath, and amused himself by driving several iron wedges into the joints of the rails; the said wedges, projecting several inches, were to have the effect of pitching the whole train bodily into the ravine. Which benevolent design, however, was doomed to frustration, thanks to the vigilance of the engine driver, who detected the danger and was able to stop the train just in time. The amiable deviser of this

practical joke on a large scale had not up till then been apprehended, nor ever would be in all probability. It struck me, in passing over it, that no better spot could have been hit upon for the purpose, and a very nasty, awkward-looking place it was.

Pieter Maritzburg, or Maritzburg as it is commonly called, is named after Pieter Maritz, one of the leaders of the emigrant Boers, its original founders, and is situated in a wide basin closed round on three sides by lofty hills. It is the capital of Natal and the seat of Government. A pleasant looking place, with long, wide streets, the city seems to nestle in a perfect forest of blue gums, whose dark foliage constitutes an agreeable relief to the 'hardness' of roofs and chimneys, and many of the houses stand back from the street in their gardens.

The native name for Maritzburg is Mkunkundhlovu,¹ which sonorous appellation, however, was not bestowed upon it by reason of any attributes of its own. At the time it was built Dingane reigned king in Zululand, and his chief kraal rejoiced in the name of Mkunkundhlovu; wherefore it occurred to the Natal natives, many of them Zulu refugees,

¹ The name is given in Holden's *History of Natal* to mean 'the rumbling noise of the elephant,' which exactly conveys the idea. 'Mkun-kun,' and 'indhlovu,' elephant. One is apt to confuse it with 'Gingindhlovu,' but the latter is quite a different word.

that by a parity of reasoning no better name could be given to the capital, 'the chief kraal' of the whites, and it was dubbed accordingly.

Maritzburg is a cheerful, lively place, with a European population of about 5,000. It boasts two Cathedrals, and is not badly off for institutions, possessing a fairly good library and reading-room, a club, and a couple of theatres, which last were well filled nearly every night; I had the privilege of witnessing 'Les Cloches de Corneville' in one, which, all drawbacks considered, was very fairly put on. Then there is the polo-ground, where spirited play may be seen, and the Botanical Gardens, which on band afternoons become the resort of the *élite* and fashion of the city.

I saw shops in Maritzburg as good as in English provincial towns, and a great deal better than in some; the business streets are alive all day long with traffic and vehicles of every description, from the huge buck-waggon with its long span of oxen to the light American 'spider,' which seems to be as universally used in Natal as the Cape cart and buggy in the old colony. Here, unlike Durban, you see few coolies, but plenty of aboriginals,¹ who

¹ There is a popular idea that the Natal natives are all necessarily Zulus. As a matter of fact, the majority of them are nothing of the kind, but are made up of all nations and kindreds—Bacas and Tongas, Fingoes and Basutos, &c. &c., with an admixture of Zulu here and there. Not only are their manners and customs in many respects dif-

squat around in groups or march about the streets in twos and threes on their various avocations. Prominent among these are the white uniforms of the native constables, for in Natal the guardians of the peace are nearly all natives. There is one of them—a fine, well-built fellow, in his loose white jacket and knickerbockers edged with red braid, and a rather formidable looking knob-kerrie in his hand. Those in charge of hard labour gangs are armed with assegais, which they can use pretty effectively when occasion arises. Occasion—in the shape of several runaway convicts—did arise while I was there, and some of the would-be fugitives fared badly at the hands of their sable guardians, who let fly their spears with considerable effect.

The military element is strong in the capital, and meets you at every turn, from the undress uniform of yon mounted officer, pacing his horse towards Government House or Fort Napier, to the smart scarlet of Private Tommy Atkins, striding

ferent, but they do not even *look* like the real Zulus, who, on their part, certainly refuse to own them, contemptuously terming them ‘Ama-kafúla’—‘Kafirs.’

The word ‘Zulu’ means ‘celestial’ or ‘supernal,’ from ‘Izúlu,’ ‘the Heavens.’

In the Umsinga and border districts most of the natives are real Zulus, either refugees or the descendants of refugees, with little or no fusion of other nationality: even these are looked down upon by their warrior-brethren as ‘Ama-kafúla.’

briskly among the stream of variously coloured humanity on the footway. Nor must we forget the more sober uniform of the Natal mounted policeman, who is practically, if not theoretically, entitled to classification among persons and things military; for, in addition to his arduous patrol duties, when war breaks out, the Natal Mounted Police is one of the first of the defensive forces to be 'all there' and to the fore. As a matter of fact, this useful corps did good service in the Zulu campaign; nor should it be forgotten that among the handful which made the last stubborn stand upon the 'neck' at Isandhlwana, falling in a ring around their officers, were several of the Natal Mounted Police.

I said there were two Cathedrals in Maritzburg. One owns the sway of Dr. Colenso; the other, St. Saviour's, is under the rule of Bishop Macrorie, the diocesan of the Church of South Africa. This last is a creditable looking edifice of red brick, with a rose window in the west wall, which is on the street; the interior is well arranged and church-like, and will seat about 600 people. I entered it at service time; it was in the early morning, and there were comparatively few present. A well raised and handsomely draped altar, upon which two large candles were burning, stood against the east wall, and the service, which had just begun,

was being performed by a priest in alb and vestment, his attendant kneeling behind him on the altar steps ; it was very quiet, and there was no singing or music of any kind. At the later services there was both ; they being in most respects similar to those of our better ordered Cathedrals in England, albeit room existed for ample improvement in the singing.

One of 'the things to do' on arriving in Maritzburg is to go and hear Bishop Colenso. I denied myself this privilege, however, but had the pleasure of making the Bishop's acquaintance. The lively interest and active part taken by him in all native matters is well known ; every question arising in connection with such, whether within colonial limits or far away beyond the Zulu border, has a keen observer in the Bishop of Natal. His opinions, however, find small favour in the eyes of the colonists, who, rightly or wrongly, are inclined to think that politics in no wise form part of the episcopal sphere. But whether agreeing with him or not, I believe most of them are willing to credit Dr. Colenso with sincerity, and a genuine desire to benefit the native races. In aspect the Natal philanthropist is tall and venerable, in manner quiet and affable : looking at him one can more readily understand the origin of his sobriquet among the natives,

in whose interests he is so zealous. 'Sobantu,' from 'Uyisobantu,' 'the Father of the People.'

Having interviewed agents and inspected vehicles of every description, I at length find a good strong tent-waggon in all respects suitable for rough work, and promptly become possessor of the same. The next requisite is a span of oxen and a trustworthy driver and leader, and, for the supply of these, I strike a bargain at so much a day with a native headman. But I was destined to learn by experience how deficient is the native mind in respect of punctuality, for, upon the day named, the promised team, with its attendant satellites, was conspicuous by its absence, as also on the morrow and the day after that. In short, not until the sixth day was the requisite motive power forthcoming. One side of the question was not without its advantages, for by the delay I escaped a series of violent thunderstorms, which, it may be readily supposed, would have lent a far from promising aspect to my start. Storms in Natal during the summer months are of frequent occurrence, violent and exceedingly dangerous. Every house in Maritzburg is furnished with a lightning conductor, in many instances with several.

At last the defaulting oxen put in an appear-

ance, a hardy little black span of twelve, all black or black and white. Fani, the driver, is a slightly-built good-humoured looking youth of about nineteen or twenty—not by any means sharp, but a willing, honest fellow, in which respect the Natal native is far beyond his brother of the Cape frontier; the leader, who rejoices in the name of Mlamvu, is a smart boy of about sixteen, with an ugly quizzical countenance. Capital fellows they both proved.

We haste to load up the waggon, provisioning it for several months. A couple of sacks of mealie-meal for the ‘boys,’¹ a bag of flour, a few tinned articles, and a couple of sides of smoked bacon, a sack of crushed mealies wherewith to supplement my steed’s diurnal graze—for I had picked up a first-rate Basuto pony, rather rough to look at, but easy in his paces, and game for any amount of work—a spade and pick, a waggon-jack and a hatchet, a pot and kettle; in short, the vehicle is stocked with everything that is necessary, and a little that is not.

But one thing yet is lacking to the completion of the turn-out—a third ‘hand’ who can do a little interpreting. Much disquietude has been caused me by the scarcity of material in this line which

¹ All native servants in Natal are technically ‘boys,’ irrespective of age.

Maritzburg could furnish. I try and induce several likely-looking 'boys' to accompany me in that capacity. One, though satisfactory enough as to linguistic requirements, is, for some reason of his own, unable to leave just then; another, true to the strain of traditional refugeeism in his composition, has misgivings as to the advisability of venturing across the Zulu border; a third is willing enough to go, and handy in every other respect, but—with little more knowledge of the British tongue than of Sanscrit. And so on throughout the wearisome chapter, till, tired of the whole concern, and rather than go through any further delay, I resolve to start in the hope of picking up my interpreter at Grey Town, about forty miles on the road.

Apart from the above little difficulty, all seems promising enough. Through the kindness of the Administrator and other friends, I am furnished with letters to the magistrates and officials along my route. So all being ready, we inspan, one fine sunny afternoon—crack! crack! goes the whip—we move off; and the capital lying beneath, embowered in its gardens and blue gum trees, disappears as we mount the crest of the hill *en route* for the border.

CHAPTER V.

Off to the Border—Grey Town—‘Blue gums’—Bush scenery—The Tugela—An aquatic dilemma—Sunrise on the Biggarsberg Heights—A model road—Rorke’s Drift, past and present.

AT first it seems rather slow work rolling tediously along on a hot afternoon at the rate of three or four miles an hour, but I soon fall into it and sit on the waggon box, pipe in mouth, with all the stoicism of an old ‘trekker.’ A short outspan towards sundown, on again, and suddenly—for there is little or no twilight in Southern Africa—drops the curtain of night; the stars shine out one by one, the hills loom black against the liquid sky, yonder a twinkling light points to the whereabouts of some homestead standing in its group of blue gums, while here and there a distant grass fire glows red upon the far horizon. All is still, save for the whistle of a flight of plover, which startled from the ground by the tramp of my horse’s feet, circle overhead sounding their shrill pipes; while now and then the rumble of the waggon as it crawls slowly over the hills behind, or the harsh shout of

the driver to his span, comes faintly on the silence of the night. Presently the sky brightens, the outlines of the hills assume more definite shape, the heavens are suffused with a gathering flush, and a golden moon rises, gently flooding the open sweeping landscape far and near. And now I hear the murmur and plashing of a river; the walls of a few houses shimmer white in the moonlight; I have reached the Umgeni bridge, twelve miles from Maritzburg, so dismounting I await the arrival of the waggon and outspan for the night. But it is a short rest. Long before sunrise we are on the road again; and avoiding the midday heat and travelling by night and in the early morning, we reach Grey Town the following day.

If asked what struck me as the most prominent feature of Grey Town I should inevitably reply 'Blue gums,' for the blue gum is everywhere—in the gardens, along the streets, sheltering the homesteads, dropped about the hillsides—lines upon lines of this useful and ornamental tree, giving quite a snug appearance to the village, which otherwise would stand bare and commonplace upon an open plain. The native name for Grey Town is Mkunkundhlovwane, 'Little Maritzburg,' being the diminutive of their name for the capital, of which the place looks like a minimised version. Put more idiomatically it might be rendered 'Maritzburg on a small scale.'

But I must find my third 'hand.' Here again, however, all the old difficulties crop up. Plenty of 'boys' are ready to engage, but are deficient in the very first qualification; others, again, who would be just what I wanted, are out of the way for the time being, nor does anyone know how or where to get at them. At last, thanks to the kind and valuable assistance of Mr. Mansel, the officer in command of the Natal Mounted Police at Grey Town, I succeed in securing the services of a likely-looking 'boy' with a sufficient knowledge of English, and in other respects a quiet, good-tempered, willing fellow. At early dawn we are on the move, toiling slowly up the long hill away from Grey Town, and by the time it begins to wax unpleasantly warm we halt on a beautiful spot at the entrance to 'the thorns.' Andries, the Grey Town 'boy,' has fraternised with the driver and leader—natives 'chum' very readily—and has had an opportunity of making himself useful, so that when we inspan late in the afternoon, as the sun's rays begin to abate their fierceness, everything is square and promising for the trip.

And now the country, which hitherto has been open and wholly destitute of bush, suddenly assumes a very different aspect. Thick vegetation covers the valley into which we are descending, and far as the eye can reach the wooded slopes

stretch away, purple and dim in the afternoon haze. The road winds round the spurs in its gradual descent, becoming wilder and more rugged. On the one hand a mighty precipice rears its red wall, pierced with holes and caves like so many black spots upon its surface; there a mass of gigantic crags piled against the sky-line like the turrets of a stately castle; further on, a huge rock stands out in solitary ruggedness amid the surroundings of the dark green bush. Birds of brilliant plumage are winging in and out among the aloes and mimosa trees; the clear whistle of the spreuw¹ peals with many an echo from yon frowning cliff; while far away down the valley is heard the soft 'cooing' of hundreds of turtledoves. Nor is insect life wanting; the cicada's constant chirp and the whirr of a large winged locust, the gnat's shrill horn and the loud booming hum of a big beetle—all blend harmoniously in the swell of Nature's evening chorus. Now we dip down almost out of sight to cross the deep bed of a trickling watercourse—up again, but everywhere mountain and valley, towering cliff, bush-clad slope and black ravine; a panorama of Nature in her wildest and most fantastic aspect. But hark! the distant barking of a dog and the low of cattle. Not even these familiar sounds tell of approaching civilisa-

¹ A bird of the starling tribe.

tion, for picturesquely situated on yonder spur is a native kraal, its beehive-shaped huts standing in a circle round the cattle enclosure—meet abode of savage man, in keeping with his wild surroundings.

Nearer and nearer dips the sun to the overhanging mountain tops, the outlines of the hills start forth sharp and defined from the haze which has hitherto toned them down, and the effects of light and shade are perfect. Yonder a distant cliff gleams like a wall of burnished bronze rising from an emerald-covered slope, as the slanting beams strike full upon its smooth surface; another, which hitherto has been all in the light, now falls back into gloom, throwing its long black shadow beneath, as though sullenly resenting the fickle desertion of the glorious sun. And the night falls. Star after star, with many a flashing constellation, quivers in the vault above, and the Southern Cross shines upon the lonely traveller like a candelabrum of golden lamps. A nightjar rises and skims overhead uttering its whirring note; the bark of a prowling jackal far away in the thorns is borne upon the stillness; every now and then a big beetle, whizzing with loud hum through the warm air, blunders into my face as I ride along; fireflies glint among the bushes in many a floating spark, but not a sound or sight which tells of the presence of man—the night side of Nature in her own soli-

tudes. Dismounting, I sit by the roadside in the gloom and await the waggon. A large hare sidles out of the bush and ambles contentedly along the road; true to the British instinct of destructiveness I pick up a stone and launch it at the unsuspecting quadruped, but my improvised missile does not take effect,—and there is the waggon coming round the bend, so resigning my pony to Andries I climb on to the box. We plod slowly but merrily along, for my retainers are cheerful fellows, and sing, chat, and laugh with five-hundred-lung power. A couple of hours more and we are at the Mooi River Drift, forming one of a group of waggons there outspanned, whose fires throw a red flickering glare on the surrounding bush. It is late; so after tying the oxen to the yokes, getting the kettle into play and disposing of the contents of the same, my sable retinue rolls itself in its blanket and turns in, an example which after our long ‘trek’ I am not ill-disposed to follow, and know no more till awoke to consciousness at dawn by sundry forcible and time-honoured ejaculations attendant upon inspanning, as my neighbours of the previous night are making a start. We do likewise, but before we reach the high ridge between Mooi River and the Tugela the sun has been up some time and the result is not stimulating. Once over the ridge the rest of the way is down

hill. A long straight bit of road, where we seem poised, as on a ledge, over the valley beneath, affords a magnificent view ; then the descent begins, and bump, bump—a long slide—a lurch first to this side then to that—more bumping, and after two hours or so of toilsome descent into a hot valley we halt at the Tugela Drift to recruit, if haply one may find rest and shade in such a sweltering hole.

Now there is on the Tugela at that point an efficient pontoon, which, the drift being a remarkably bad one, is usually in requisition. I, having had a good deal of experience in crossing South African rivers, ought to have known better ; but thinking that the drift, though broad, was probably smooth and shallow, went at it most confidently, voting the pontoon unnecessary in the present instance. The result was melancholy. In rolled the waggon pleasantly enough till nearly in mid-stream—at that point more than 150 yards wide—and there suddenly stuck. The water became deeper and deeper ; the current running so strong that the leader could barely keep his feet, and the whole turn-out was in imminent jeopardy of going down stream. In vain we shouted and yelled ; in vain we plied whip and thong upon the obdurate hides of the recalcitrant team ; in vain we exhausted all the

forcible and suggestive phraseology in the vocabulary of the road, and began again; there we stuck. What was to be done? Turning back was a physical impossibility, and the oxen began to plunge and get more and more unmanageable, for, bending back their heads in order to keep their noses above the surface, the poor brutes were half strangled by the yoke-straps. The water was already flowing over the footboard; an inch deeper and the waggon would be flooded, which meant that my supplies for the trip would be seriously damaged, if not absolutely spoilt. In despair I tried another plan. Could we but keep the oxen quiet for a few moments, the short rest might get us through provided the water became no deeper. Again the whips crack like pistol shots—a sudden pull, the oxen feel their feet—another sudden and more violent tug, and we roll out; a couple of minutes more and we are on the other side breathless and exhausted, the steam ascending in clouds from the dripping flanks of the panting span. But I there and then register a vow that nothing on earth will induce me again to tempt that execrable drift, unless the water is very low indeed.

About eighteen miles beyond the Tugela is the seat of magistracy for the border division of Umsinga. Calling on the resident magistrate,

Mr. Fynn, I was most kindly received, and not having yet been long enough on my travels to get used to my own company, but quite long enough to be rather tired of the same, I was able thoroughly to enjoy spending an evening in civilised fashion with that hospitable official. Pushing on again the following afternoon, we halted at nightfall near the top of the Biggarsberg ridge, expecting to make Rorke's Drift the next day.

The moon is still shining brightly as we inspan for an early start, and not until we are well on the road do the stars begin to pale, but the morning is cold and raw. As we 'trek' along the ridge a sight peculiar to mountainous country bursts upon the view. The road is clear, but a hundred yards or so to the right the ground falls abruptly into a vast and unbroken mass of fleecy cloud, white as driven snow. Presently a heavy film of mist steals up from below, growing thicker and thicker, till we are moving along through the raw fog, and seem to enter again into darkness, but not for long; as the sun rises the mist rolls back, hanging in silver curtains over the sparkling ground, and many a tiny rainbow flashes its prismatic hues as the sunbeams cleave the dewy vapour. And now the sun is well up; the dense masses of billowy cloud stretch away from one's

very feet ; the road winds over a narrow neck as through a gate, opening upon a fresh expanse of country, which at present, however, is completely veiled. The firmament is a beautifully clear greenish-blue above the dazzling whiteness ; birds are singing on all sides, and every blade of grass gleams and sparkles with myriads of liquid diamonds.

The whole valley of the Buffalo and the country beyond the Zulu border is veiled in thick impenetrable cloud, and Helpmakaar, for all practical purposes, seems still under the influence of the drowsy god. But I am in want of information as to the road, so proceed summarily to knock up one of the inhabitants, and learn that there are two roads to Rorke's Drift, both infamously bad ; in fact little to choose between them, save in point of distance, the shortest being twelve miles, the other about twice as long. No huge amount of inductive ratiocination being required to perceive that twenty-four miles of iniquitously bad road is worse than twelve of ditto, I elect to take the shortest and chance it.

Helpmakaar,¹ which it will be remembered was an important dépôt during the Zulu war, is on the main road to Newcastle, and is situated on one of the highest ridges of the Biggarsberg,

¹ A Dutch word meaning ' help each other.'

commanding a wide sweep of open country on either side. It consists of three or four houses and a few shanties, including an 'hotel,' and boasts a post office agency. The entrenchment still remains—a solid-looking earthwork surrounded by a fosse ; close by is a little cemetery containing the graves of those officers and men who succumbed to exposure and fatigue while at that bleak station. Here, too, fled the fugitives from Isandhlwana, and at last I felt that I was actually on historic ground.

I said that the road thence to Rorke's Drift was infamously bad, and in saying so I have fallen far short of adequately describing it. All was well enough till the steep part of the descent began, and then—huge stones, boulders, pebbles, rocks large and rocks small, heaped one upon another or lying strewn about ; the actual roadway as uneven as a dry watercourse — bump, bump, bump, the order of the day. Again and again I thought the waggon must inevitably break to pieces as the wheels on one side were poised high in air, grinding over a huge stone, those on the other crashing violently into a deep rut, and the whole fabric literally twisting and writhing as though it had life. But marvellous is the elasticity of these vehicles ; I was nearly saying that india-rubber was a joke thereto, for twenty times as

I rode along did I expect to see the whole structure fairly wrenched asunder; however, we reached the plain below with little more damage than the starting of a bolt or two, and again I breathed freely.

From the brow of the hill just before descending, Isandhlwana comes into view, standing out in rugged boldness from the surrounding heights, towering grim and dark in the summer haze like a huge lion,¹ but the glimpse is little more than a momentary one, and is lost to sight as the road makes a sudden dip. In front the Buffalo threads along, past Rorke's Drift and the Bashi valley, and the open plain stretches away beyond the Blood River, far into the Transvaal territory. A silent and desert expanse; on the right a semi-gloom, where the frowning cliffs overhanging the Bashi valley cast their shadows; not a sign of life anywhere—a lonely and unprotected border.

It was late in the afternoon as we descended to the plain. A couple of tall blue gums rising above a slight eminence mark the site of the famous post; in front again appears the stern shape of Isandhlwana, its precipitous wall clear and distinct in the setting sun. Riding on I soon reached the post. The post, did I say? Few or no traces of the old fortifications were to be seen,

¹ From whatever point you look at it, Isandhlwana wears the shape of a lion *couchant*.

but a large house was in course of construction, the residence of Mr. Otto Witt, the Swedish missionary, whose name, it may be remembered, was before the public at the beginning of the war. Much carpentering and joining was going on in the verandah; outhouses stood around, hard by was the chapel belonging to the Mission, but of the defences not a trace. Save for the little cemetery, where are lying the few who fell of that handful of gallant defenders, it would be difficult to realise that one stood on the site of the most brilliant feat of arms of our day. To the cemetery I passed; a modest burial ground enclosed by a sod wall, the names of its silent denizens graven on an obelisk in the midst.

The sun had sunk behind the western ridges, the shadows of evening were creeping over a cloudless sky, and as I stood among the grass-grown graves the events of that memorable night seemed to rise up one by one. There was the conical hill overhanging the post, round whose base the enemy first appeared; the ledge of rocks a couple of hundred yards off, from which his sharp-shooters harassed our position till dislodged by the heavy fire of our men. I said that all traces of the fortifications had disappeared, yet would imagination supply deficiencies; the outer and inner lines of defence, the site of the hospital—and I seemed to see the terrific rush of the savage

hosts as they swarmed up to the breastwork, the desperately determined faces of its defenders, the smoke and crash of volleys, the lurid flames of the burning hospital and the ghastly countenances of its inmates as they are brought out one by one, the gleam of a forest of blades in the red light. Still could I hear the clash of assegai and shield splintered by bayonet thrusts dealt with all the fury of men fighting for their lives, the 'thud' of falling bodies, the ringing shots, the reckless British hurrah mingled with the fierce 'Usútu'¹ pealing from 4,000 savage throats as again and again the columns of maddened Zulu warriors poured on to the attack—to use their own metaphor—'seeing nothing but blood!'

But my reverie is broken in upon by the sound of wheels, and looking up I discover that the waggon is close at hand, so betake myself forthwith to the drift, which is nearly a quarter of a mile distant from the post. I would fain cross to-night, but am unacquainted with the idiosyncrasies of the said drift; the oxen have had a long day of it, and I have no fancy for a repetition of the Tugela entertainment: moreover it is nearly dark, so I conclude to outspan and defer crossing till the morrow.

¹ The Zulu war cry.

CHAPTER VI.

Isandhlwana—St. Vincent's Mission—A coincidence—The Zulu 'at church'—A vexed question—Bishop McKenzie.

MORNING. The summer sun has dispersed the chill folds of a heavy mist, and his cheering rays fall upon as pleasant a scene as one could wish to cast eye over. Across a charming bit of country does my first stage in Zululand lead, steep and stony in parts, in others smooth and undulating, but everywhere green and smiling, for these are well-watered regions, and you cannot go far without coming upon a spring or a stream of some sort. On the right the Buffalo makes a bend round the base of Shiyane, the conical bushy mountain overlooking Rorke's Drift, and a high rugged range rises on the Natal side of the river—in front Isandhlwana—on the left a long array of precipitous rocks overhanging the beautiful valley of the Bashi, and presently we cross the river of that name; a shallow limpid stream bubbling along over its sandy bottom. But signs of habita-

tion now begin to show ; a mealie patch here and there, cattle grazing among the thorns, then larger mealie gardens in which women are at work, and on the hillside stands a well-to-do-looking kraal. A fine athletic native trots past, hurling his cheery greeting 'Inkos!' (Chief) over his shoulder as he runs. A picturesque object is he, tall and lithe as a bronze Apollo ; a few fantastic ornaments of beadwork and hide constitute his attire, a long reed snuff-box is stuck through the lobe of his ear, and in his hand the inevitable knobkerrie.

At last we dip down into the valley through which swept the right horn of the Zulu army to cut off retreat by the Rorke's Drift road. A clear stream is brawling along over rocks and stones, birds are whistling among the aloes and mimosa bushes, and in front the western cliff of Isandhlwana heaves high in air. I ride up the slope and gain the 'neck' ; on the right is the small stony hillock known as 'Black's Kopje,' and Fugitives' Track, a scarcely discernible path, leading away from it into the thorns ; the huge crag, now towering immediately overhead, casts a long dark shadow on the plain, whose stillness is only broken by the hum of a passing insect or the chirp of a small bird in the grass, and amid the hush of the summer afternoon all the associations of the spot

seem to crowd up thick and fast. There on the right is a high cairn of stones, marking the spot where Colonel Durnford, Lieutenant Scott, and the Natal Carbineers made their last stand ; near this a few graves, the remains of whose occupants are partly uncovered through the wasting away of the soil by rains ; lower down, an obelisk, a tombstone or two, and mounds of earth mark the resting places of more victims of that disastrous day, and a little below the ' neck ' stands the iron cross erected by the Bishop of Maritzburg on the occasion of his holding a funeral service there.

I ride over the camp ground, and although three years have elapsed, there is no lack of traces of the melancholy struggle. In spite of a luxuriant growth of herbage the circles where stood the rows of tents are plainly discernible, while strewn about are tent pegs, cartridge cases, broken glass, bits of rope, meat tins and sardine boxes pierced with assegai stabs, shrivelled up pieces of shoe-leather, and rubbish of every description ; bones of horses and oxen gleam white and ghastly, and here and there in the grass one stumbles upon a half-buried skeleton. From the back of the camp ground rises a steep slope, covered with stones and boulders, and culminating in the rocky wall which rears itself to a height of four hundred feet above the plain. A striking and remarkable mount is

Isandhlwana, not another hill around is there in the least like it; in fact the only one resembling it in any degree is the Zihlalu, between Ulundi and Inhlazatye, which, however, is on a much larger scale. I have already alluded to the lion-like shape of Isandhlwana, and it is not a little curious that it should also resemble the sphinx badge of the 24th Regiment. I showed one of these badges, picked up on the field, to a Zulu warrior who had taken part in the battle, and drew his attention to the coincidence. He gave a start and ejaculation of astonishment, and shook his head in deprecation of the 'uncanniness' of the whole proceeding.

St. Vincent's Mission, the residence and headquarters of the Bishop of Zululand, stands on the north side of the camp ground, at the foot of the steep range over which the main body of the enemy came—a substantial stone house, a few huts, some strips of cultivated land, and a stone enclosure or two for cattle and horses. There is no regular 'location,' the only natives living on the station being those employed in house or farm work in connection therewith—a move in the right direction, for anyone who has travelled in South Africa will bear me out in saying that among the tumble-down ill-built huts of mission and town locations, dirt and squalor reign to an extent unknown in the ordinary native kraals, which are,

as a rule, singularly neat and tidy. The community at St. Vincent's consisted of the Bishop and his household, two clergymen and a lay school-master, a farm overseer, and a few colonial boys training for mission work—about a dozen Europeans in all. Not by any means a luxurious or easy life is that of these missionaries. Frequent services, kraal visiting, school duties, and manual labour in the field, all this keeps their time thoroughly occupied from early morning till dark and after. Nor is accommodation sumptuous; one of them had nothing more commodious for a sleeping apartment and study than a small native hut, another had made a bedroom of the Bishop's travelling waggon. The mission house too is plainly furnished, but his lordship is very mindful of the apostolic injunction, and hospitality forms a real item in the St. Vincent's programme. The Sunday services were many, and mostly in the Zulu language; there was no church, but a room had been fitted up to do duty for it, and at one end, on a raised footpace, stood an altar, duly garnished with a large cross and a pair of candlesticks. It struck me that Bishop McKenzie in his alb and chasuble looked far more episcopal than his English *confrères* in the meaningless, balloon-sleeved vesture so dear to the heart of the Anglican prelate, and that the service was more

calculated to impress the heathen with a sense of dignity and importance. There being no harmonium, the singing was unaccompanied, and when in the course of it a stray 'click' occurred, the effect was not a little curious to uninitiated ears. But I thought I had never heard a language which suited the Divine Office better than this sonorous and musical tongue. There was a service specially for heathen, on which occasion the room was well filled, mostly with men from kraals in the neighbourhood, who listened attentively and respectfully to the 'Umfundisi';¹ whether they really took in what was told them is quite another thing, for it is no easy matter to convince the shrewd, sceptical Zulu. He will listen patiently and courteously enough—for he has all the instincts of a gentleman—while in his heart of hearts he is thinking 'there is not much in it;' or he will shake his head with a deprecatory smile, which might be interpreted '*Umfundisi* is a good man, but——.' While on the subject of missions and missionaries, an idea seems to have got hold of the religious world that the first thing to do with a native is to clothe him—in fact, that until he can be induced to wear breeches his Christianity is worth very little indeed. Let anyone doubting this look at the first missionary periodical at

¹ Teacher or missionary.

hand :—‘ The natives take readily to clothes ’—
‘ the people are all asking for clothes ’—such are
the statements that will meet the eye, as if the
sudden development of a taste for tailoring among
a dark-skinned race in a sweltering climate was a
sure sign of grace. The Zulu in his normal garb
(which is far more decent than that of most
savages), his supple limbs modelled like those of a
bronze statue, striding along with head erect and
light elastic step, is a fine noble-looking fellow ;
clap a tweed suit and shirt collar upon him, not
omitting a chimney-pot hat, or even a wideawake,
and you turn him into an awkward ungainly
barbarian, looking and feeling thoroughly ridi-
culous and uncomfortable. Wherefore the ques-
tion arises—Can these people be intended to wear
clothes ?

A practical difficulty which meets the mission-
ary at every turn is polygamy, a custom so deeply
rooted in the national institutions as to be an
almost insurmountable barrier to the spread of
Christianity. The Zulu gains in position and im-
portance according to the number of his wives, for
these represent value received for so many head of
cattle paid away, which in turn constitute riches ;
and over and above the actual loss of their labour
in the tillage of the soil, a man of position would
hardly undergo the ridicule and social degrada-

tion which the putting away of his women would involve. Nor is it by any means sure that these good ladies would take the matter quietly—and ‘curtain influence’ counts for something even in Zululand—the cant that has been talked about the oppressed and down-trodden state of the women notwithstanding, on which subject, by the way, it struck me, during my progress through the country, that they wore anything but a crushed appearance. I heard the above difficulty discussed by the missionaries, who themselves seemed by no means clear as to the solution of the question, but with them I shall now leave it.

Bishop McKenzie is a tall, dark man in the prime of life, and gifted with a strong voice and good delivery. As to his energy there can be no sort of doubt. He is at work from morning till night at one thing or another, and periodically makes Visitation tours throughout his somewhat extensive diocese; at the time of my leaving Zululand he was on the point of starting upon one of these, to extend far away beyond the Swazi country, a matter of several weeks. An isolated life is this missionary life, unendurable for any length of time save to those whose hearts are in the work. To the hard-worked priest toiling in the slums of our teeming cities the free air and sun-

shine, the great mountains and silent wastes of a wild country, may seem a pleasant relief to turn to. But I question whether the isolation would not counterbalance other attractions and advantages when put to the test.

CHAPTER VII.

Meaning of 'Isandhlwana'—Zulu narratives of the battle.

THE site of the camp is along the eastern base of Isandhlwana,¹ which rises immediately above it in the rear; fronting it the country is all open to Isipezi mountain, some fourteen miles off, where Lord Chelmsford was engaging Matyana at the time of the attack. On the left, but at right angles to Isandhlwana, which lies north and south, runs the Nqutu range, over which the Zulu army first appeared. At the foot of this range, about two miles from camp, is a conical eminence where the rocket battery was stationed. The actual scene of operations, then, was an oblong plain about three miles in extent, whence, in the event of defeat, escape would only be possible by making for the

¹ The meaning of Isandhlwana, or more correctly Isandhlwane, is neither 'little hand,' nor 'little house,' nor any other of the hundred and one interpretations which were devised at the time of the disaster, but refers to a portion of bovine intestinal anatomy. The spelling of the word which I shall observe throughout these pages will be that which is now universally employed, though 'Isandhlwane' is the more correct. The pronunciation of the word is exactly according to its orthography, every letter being distinctly sounded.

river some miles off on the right, or by gaining the Rorke's Drift road over the 'neck' in the rear. The slope round the actual base of Isandhlwana is steep and rugged, and intersected with deep 'dongas' here and there, the rest of the plain being fairly smooth.

The following narrative is that of a warrior of the Umbonambi regiment, who was present at the battle; I give it as nearly as possible in his own words:—

'Several days before the fight we started from Undini, eight regiments strong (about 25,000 men). The King said, "The white soldiers have crossed into Zululand and are coming further in, soon they will be here (at Undini); go and drive them across Umzinyati (the Buffalo) right back into Natal." The *impi*¹ was commanded by Tyingwayo; under him were Mavumengwane, Mundúla, and Vumandaba, the *induna* (chief) of the Kandampemvu regiment; this regiment is also called Umcityu, but Kandampemvu is the oldest name. Matyana-ka-Mondisi was not present, nor was Dabulamanzi. Untuswa, brother of Seketwayo, is the *induna* of my regiment; he took part in the fight, so did Mehlo-ka-zulu and Sirayo's other son. The chief Sibepu also fought.

¹ A body of men under arms for any military or aggressive purpose.

‘ We were lying in the hills up there, when one of our scouting parties came back followed by a number of mounted men ; they were most of them natives, but some were whites. They fired upon us. Then the whole *impi* became very excited and sprang up. When the horsemen saw how numerous we were they began to retreat. We formed up in rank and marched towards the camp. At the top of the last hill we were met by more horsemen, but we were too many for them and they retreated. Here, where we are standing (my informant’s kraal was situated close to the rocket hill before mentioned), there were some parties of soldiers in red coats who kept up a heavy fire upon us as we came over. My regiment was here and lost a lot of men ; they kept tumbling over one upon another. (The narrator became quite excited, and indulged in much gesticulation, illustrating the volleys by cracking his fingers like pistol-shots.) Then the Ngobamakosi regiment, which formed the left horn of the *impi*, extended and swept round on the south of the rocket hill so as to outflank the soldiers, who, seeing this, fell back and took cover in that donga¹ (pointing to a donga which inter-

¹ These dongas are rifts in the ground caused by heavy rains, and varying in depth from two to fifty feet. So suddenly do they occur that where you thought all was smooth and unbroken, you find yourself on the brink of a yawning chasm, which perhaps will necessitate a détour of several miles.

sects the field about a mile from camp), and fired upon us from there. By that time the Ngobamakosi had got among the "paraffin" (rockets) and killed the horses, and were circling round so as to shut in the camp on the side of the river, but *we* could not advance, the fire from the donga was too heavy. The great *indunas* were on the hill over there (pointing to an eminence commanding the north side of the camp, above where the mission-house now stands), and just below them a number of soldiers were engaging the Kandampemvu regiment, which was being driven back, but one of the sub-chiefs of the Kandampemvu ran down from the hill and rallied them, calling out that they would get the whole *impi* beaten and must come on. Then they all shouted "Usútu!" and waving their shields charged the soldiers with great fury. The chief was shot through the forehead and dropped down dead, but the Kandampemvu rushed over his body and fell upon the soldiers, stabbing them with their assegais and driving them right in among the tents.

'My regiment and the Umpunga formed the centre of the *impi*. When the soldiers in the donga saw that the Kandampemvu were getting behind them, they retreated upon the camp, firing at us all the time. As they retreated we followed them. I saw several white men on horseback

galloping towards the "neck," which was the only point open; then the Nokenke and Nodwengu regiments, which had formed the right horn of the *impi*, joined with the Ngobamakosi on the "neck." After that there was so much smoke that I could not see whether the white men had got through or not. The tumult and the firing was wonderful; every warrior shouted "Usútu!" as he killed anyone, and the sun got very dark,¹ like night, with the smoke. The English fought long and hard; there were so many of our people in front of me that I did not get into the thick of the fight until the end. The warriors called out that all the white men had been killed, and then we began to plunder the camp. The Undi and Udhloko regiments, which had been in reserve, then went on "kwa Jim"² to take the post there. We found "tywala"³ in the camp, and some of our men got very drunk. We were so hot and thirsty that we drank everything liquid we found, without waiting to see what it was. Some of them found some black stuff in bottles (probably ink); it did not look good, so they did not drink it; but one or two who drank some

¹ He is referring to an annular eclipse, which, it is not a little curious, should have taken place while the frightful conflict was at its height.

² Literally, 'at Jim's.' Rorke's Drift is so called by the Zulus after one 'Jim' Rorke, who formerly lived there.

³ Native beer. The word is also applied to ardent spirits or any sort of intoxicating beverage.

paraffin oil, thinking it was “tywala,” were poisoned. We took as much plunder as we could carry, and went away home to our kraals. We did not re-assemble and march back to Ulundi.

‘At first we had not intended attacking the camp that day, as the moon was “wrong” (in an unfavourable quarter—a superstition), but as the whites had discovered our presence the *indunas* said we had better go on. Only six regiments took part in the fight—the Nodwengu, Nokenke, Umbonambi, Umpunga, Kandampemvu, and Ngobamakosi. The Uve is part of the Ngobamakosi, and not a separate corps; it is the boys’ regiment.’

The above seems a plain unvarnished version of those events of the day which came within the narrator’s actual observation; the following account is that of a Zulu belonging to the Nokenke regiment, which, with the Nodwengu, formed the right horn of the attacking force, and operated at the back of Isandhlwana mountain. The first portion of the narrative, as to how the affair began, tallies exactly with that of the Umbonambi warrior, albeit the men were unknown to each other, for I picked up this story in a different part of the country. After describing the earlier movements, he went on:—

‘ While the Kandampemvu were driving back the horsemen over the hill north of the camp, we worked round behind Isandhlwana under cover of the long grass and dongas, intending to join with the Ngobamakosi on the “neck” and sweep in upon the camp. Then we saw white men beginning to run away along the road “kwa Jim ;” many of these were cut off and killed, down in the stream which flows through the bottom of the valley. More and more came over, some mounted and some on foot. When they saw that the valley was full of our warriors, they turned to the left and ran off along the side of the hill towards Umzinyati (the Buffalo) ; those who had not got horses were soon overtaken. The Nodwengu pursued the mounted men, numbers of whom were killed among the thorns and dongas, but I heard that some escaped. Our regiment went over into the camp. The ground is high and full of dongas and stones, and the soldiers did not see us till we were right upon them. They fought well—a lot of them got up on the steep slope under the cliff behind the camp, and the Zulus could not get at them at all ; they were shot or bayoneted as fast as they came up. At last the soldiers gave a shout and charged down upon us. There was an *induna*¹ in front of them with a long flashing sword, which he whirled round his head as he ran—it must have been made of fire.

¹ Supposed to be Captain Younghusband.

Wheugh ! (Here the speaker made an expressive gesture of shading the eyes.) They killed themselves by running down, for our people got above them and quite surrounded them ; these, and a group of white men on the " neck," were the last to fall.

'The sun turned black in the middle of the battle ; we could still see it over us, or should have thought we had been fighting till evening. Then we got into the camp, and there was a great deal of smoke and firing. Afterwards the sun came out bright again.'—'Were there any prisoners taken?' I asked.—'No ; all were killed on the field, and at once ; no white men were tortured : it is the Zulu custom to kill everyone on the spot ; prisoners are never taken.'

There seems no reason for doubting this statement, which may be taken as scattering to the winds the numerous absurd and sensational 'yarns' which got about at the time, and are still credited. Several Zulus whom I questioned on the subject all agreed in saying that it was not the custom to torture prisoners of war, though it was sometimes done in cases of 'umtagati' (witchcraft). Hence it is comforting to know that our unfortunate countrymen who fell on that fatal day were spared the most horrible side of savage warfare, and met their deaths as soldiers, in the thick of battle, at the hands of a foe in every respect worthy of their steel.

CHAPTER VIII.

'Fugitives' Drift'—The saving of the Colours—Zulus 'at Home'—
A novel brew—On headgear—'The gilt off the gingerbread'—A
Rorke's Drift hero—Ascent of Isandhlwana—Relics—A grand
monument.

ONE morning I started from Isandhlwana to explore the line of retreat to 'Fugitives' Drift,' as it is now called, accompanied by one of the mission clergy, who had kindly offered to act as guide. Riding over the camp ground we crossed the waggon road on the 'neck,' and struck into the narrow path running along the base of 'Black's Kopje' down into the ravine. Heaps of *débris* lay about—bones and skulls of oxen, belt buckles, sardine tins, shrivelled-up boots, the nails falling out of the rotting soles, odds and ends of clothing, old brushes—in fact, rubbish of all sorts; while every ten or twenty yards we would come upon sadder traces of the flight in the shape of little heaps of stones, through the interstices of which could be seen the bones of some unfortunate buried underneath. The track is smooth enough for three or

four hundred yards, and then the trouble begins ; as we get among the thorns the ground is seamed with deep dongas yawning suddenly before us, rendering riding anything but safe. Now we are on the brink of one of these chasms ; then the track suddenly diverging, takes us along a narrow razor-like ridge with a fall of some fifteen or twenty feet on either side. I pictured to myself what long odds were against a lot of men riding for their lives over such ground, all crowding upon each other, and the savage enemy behind rushing in among them with unearthly yells, driving the maddened horses into the dongas and stabbing their riders—and many seemed to have come to grief here, judging from the traces. At the bottom of one of these fissures lay the fragments of an ammunition train, which had evidently taken a regular ‘header,’ the shattered skeletons of four horses or mules in a heap together, and thinly covered over with stones those of the two unfortunates who presumably were with the team. Among twisted-up ends of old straps and harness, ammunition boxes splintered and broken were strewn. I found the rope handle of one of these intact, and very hard I had to saw at it before I could get it off. Pretty good this, after three years of exposure to weather. On all sides were traces and remains of the flight ; here and there one

would come upon significant heaps of earth or stones, or a rag of clothing fluttering on a bush just as it had been torn from some fugitive. After crossing the stream at the bottom of the valley the ground is open, but fearfully rough and stony, and so it continues the whole way. The bulk of those who fled must have been killed within the first couple of miles, according to the signs.

My companion had brought his gun, and a covey of partridges rising in front of us, he made a good right and left shot, dropping his brace ; but owing to the length and thickness of the grass, we could only find one of the birds, after much searching. Then we put up three or four bucks, which, however, kept religiously out of shot range, and we had no rifle ; so the mission larder was defrauded again.

At length we reach the brow of the last steep, and scramble down its rugged side. It is appallingly hot, as the middle of a February day in South Africa can be, and we have taken two hours and a half to get here, for so stony is the ground that we have been obliged to lead the horses nearly the whole way. 'Fugitives' Drift,' strictly speaking, is not a 'drift' at all ; probably no one ever rode through it before the event from which it takes its name, or ever will again. There is no gradual descent to the river, which at this point runs deep

and wide, and is only got at by scrambling almost headlong down a high, crumbling bank. The crossing was made at the lower end of a long reach ; in the middle of the water is a large stone, to which Melvill was clinging when his gallant companion, deliberately throwing away his own life, turned back to help him. Let us picture the scene. The swift, swollen river flowing on with a sullen roar ; the high wooded banks, whose tangled undergrowth resounds with the song of birds, while ever and anon the long-drawn whistle of a flight of spreuws, their bright plumage flashing in the sun, echoes from an overhanging cliff. Opposite, a long ravine, its aloe-covered sides sleeping in the dim heat of the sultry midsummer day. Presently an approaching clamour—louder and louder, nearer and nearer—and a crowd of men comes pouring over the brow of yon slope in wildest confusion. Horses lose their footing on the rocky steep and roll over, falling upon their riders, and the dark forms of a thousand infuriated savages are bounding in and out among the demoralised mass, plying the deadly assegai ; blades gleam redly in the sun ; despairing death cries mingle with the triumphant howls of the maddened barbarians, and the cliffs, which, a moment before, had softly echoed the peaceful song of birds, now

throw back, in thunderous reverberation, volley upon volley of ringing shots.

A few, however, have got clear of that frantic crowd. Look at those two, especially, who are riding as if they had something more than their lives to save: and so they have—the honour of their regiment—its Colours. A plunge—the water rises in jets around them, the falling drops mingling with the plash of leaden hail. Now they are through—no—one has disappeared. See, the other turns back. Why does he not keep on, the bulk of the peril is over now? A few more steps and he will be safe; it is madness, deliberate madness, to throw away his life; he can do no good by it! Who shall say that all this and more—the vision of home, a future career, a hundred hopes and ambitions—does not flash across his mind at this moment? But he is a Briton and a soldier; a comrade is in danger, and the Colours must be saved; his own life is as nothing in the balance. Again he disappears in that turbid, boiling flood. See, the bank is lined with dark eager forms; puffs of smoke issue from many a point—‘ping,’ ‘ping,’ fall the vengeful bullets. Both are down. No, they are up again, on the opposite shore, but they have lost their horses and—the Colours. A frightful yell wakes the echoes from the surrounding heights as the fierce foemen dash into the river,

like bloodhounds, in pursuit. The two heroes toil laboriously up a long ravine, but they are wounded and exhausted ; their fleet foes gain upon them ; a few hundred yards, a short struggle, and—another brilliant page has been added to the glowing annals of British deeds of arms. The two soldiers lie pierced through and through with many a wound, and the Colours are lost ; but they have done their best—their very best. And the current rolls on its course beneath the great overhanging silent cliffs, and at evening time the low of cattle wending down to drink, and the song and laughter of Zulu girls coming from a neighbouring kraal to fill their calabashes, are the only sounds that now wake these solitudes formerly rent by the din of fierce and deadly strife.

About five hundred yards from the river, near the upper end of the ravine, rest the two heroes, beneath a stone cross on which is recorded their names and the manner of their deaths.

Our way back lay through a long bushy valley to the left of the Fugitives' Track, returning from the river ; the heat was fearful, and our horses were in a perfect bath as they stepped lazily along. Presently something white lying among the grass catches my eye ; it is a human skull, large and well formed. How can it have come here, right out of the line of flight as we are ? Some poor

wretch who has perhaps crept away to die in solitude. Truly the region round about Isandhlwana seems a very Golgotha.

But a reek of smoke rising above the bushes points to habitation of some sort, and threading a narrow path through some well cultivated mealie fields, we ride up to a small kraal and dismount. Two Zulus are sitting on the ground, one busy polishing up the other's head-ring ; a vessel of water is by his side and a flat piece of wood in the operator's hand, and a few women and children tumble out of the huts to peer at the 'abelúngu' (white people). We throw ourselves on the grass and proceed to enter into conversation with the two men : the Zulu is a genial soul and enjoys nothing so much as a regular good gossip ; moreover my companion was known to them. Cheery, good-humoured fellows were these two, and chatted away at a great rate, and presently, at a hint from my companion, some 'tywala' (native beer) was brought us. Now this beverage, which is made of 'amabele,' a kind of millet, and sometimes of maize, does not of necessity commend itself to the uninitiated palate ; but when the cupbearer is a big Zulu woman, most scantily clad, who, previous to handing the bowl containing the liquor, squats down in front and takes a preliminary sip, the untravelled Briton might excusably decline to slake

his thirst under the circumstances, and suddenly discover that he is not so 'dry' as he fancied. But if haply he has toiled along for hours in the scorching atmosphere of the Buffalo valley on a February day he will, I trow, think better of it; anyhow, under our judicious handling the modicum of 'tywala' waxed smaller and beautifully less, until the bottom of the bowl became glaringly apparent. But whatever are the merits or demerits of this barbaric brew, there can be no doubt as to its refreshing properties in hot weather; to appreciate it, you must be genuinely thirsty, for it is not at all the kind of stuff to drink in cold blood. It is a very safe 'tippie,' intoxication being only contingent on the absorption of a far greater quantity than any European would care to imbibe. The practice of taking a sip before handing the bowl to a guest, has, of course, its counterpart in that of mediæval civilisation; no Zulu would think of omitting this form.

We lay there chatting for some time, the head-ring polishing going on the while. These head-rings, worn by the married men only, are made of the dark gum of the mimosa, and when well kept shine like a newly blacked boot. They are about the thickness of a man's thumb, fitting close round the top of the head just above the forehead; as a rule Zulus who wear the ring shave their heads.

The unmarried men let their hair grow naturally, as also do the girls, unlike the Natal natives, who twist and plait their wool into the most fantastic of patterns and devices. Shortly before marriage the Zulu women let the hair of the scalp grow, which, when long enough, is worked into a conical shape and anointed with red ochre till it shines and sparkles like mica. Rather a becoming arrangement is this topknot, doing away with the otherwise roundheaded 'niggerish' appearance. The same holds good of the ring.

While I was remarking upon the friendliness of our entertainers, one of them rather took the gilt off the gingerbread by asking for sixpence. My companion pointed out to him that it was bad form to beg, especially before an 'inkos' who had come all the way from England to see them, and the delinquent tried hard to appear ashamed of himself. However, I told him he must come and pay me a visit at the waggon, next day if possible, and we could have a big talk, which he promised to do, and as the sun was low and it was cool again we started, parting from our entertainers with mutual goodwill. It was dusk when we got back to the Mission, healthily tired after the day's proceedings. Next morning my Zulu friend, who answered to the name of Jojo, appeared in due course. I found he belonged to the Udhloko regiment, and had fought

at Rorke's Drift, and was well posted up in the whole question of the war. We had a long talk, after which I handed him over to my 'boys' to be well fed, and having stowed away his full share of mealie-meal and sundry jorums of black coffee—to which invigorating decoction, by the way, the natives are very partial—my visitor took his leave, hugely complacent in the acquisition of some 'gwai'¹ and sundry knickknacks dear to the barbaric heart.

Strolling up to the Mission shortly afterwards the first person I ran against was Master Jojo, who grinned significantly. I remarked casually to my companion of the day before, that that lighthearted savage had lost no time in looking me up, and had just made a pretty creditable feed. 'Why,' was the reply, to my astonishment, 'he says he's starving, and hasn't had anything to eat to-day.' When tackled with such flagrant mendacity the rascal was not a whit disconcerted: only laughed, and said that having got a lot of good things out of one 'inkos' he thought he'd better come and see what he could get out of the other. The humbug! A fine specimen was this fellow, tall, supple, and rather light coloured, with a handsome good-humoured face, but, I suspect, a great rogue.

¹ Tobacco or snuff.

I climbed to the summit of Isandhlwana, which ascent is neither long or perilous, being at the north end gradual and easy, albeit good exercise for wind and limb. From the top a good sweeping view is to be had, and the whole battlefield lies spread out beneath like a map.

I suppose that for many years relics of the conflict will keep on turning up—assegai heads, buttons, and such like ; here and there a bullet is to be found, and cartridge cases in plenty. Every now and then you come across a heap of these, and begin to speculate on how some poor fellow made a long stand for it on this particular spot until his ammunition failed. On closer inspection, however, the illusion is dispelled, for about eight out of ten of these cartridge cases have never been fired at all, as you may see by the unexploded cap and the marks of teeth where the enterprising savage has torn open the case to extract the powder and ball. I particularly noticed that none of these unexploded cases were to be found on the outskirts of the field, all there having been fired off ; not until one got upon the site of the actual camp did they become plentiful, pointing, if anything, to the fact that the fight in camp was hand to hand, our men being rushed before they had time to fire many shots, whereas those forming the outer lines of defence would have had plenty. And the above

circumstance seems to make against the idea that there was any failure of ammunition. The heavier missiles had also been emptied of their contents, and unexploded shells were plentiful enough; a number of these had been collected at the Mission, some of them being put to such commonplace uses as door weights and even candlesticks, while others did duty as borders to little bits of garden patches.

A few tombstones have been erected, mostly just below the 'neck,' rather as memorials than as marking actual graves; for, by the time the first burying party visited the place, the bodies, with very few exceptions, were past recognition. One of these exceptions was Captain George Shepstone, of the Natal Native Horse, whose grave is on the slope beneath the western precipice—a pretty sculptured cross enclosed by a low stone wall. A grass fire had blackened and laid bare the whole slope, but the flames had left untouched the grass inside the enclosure, which stood out, a green spot, with its white cross in the centre, against the surrounding blackness. But one monument is shared alike by all. Towering above the sad and fatal field, the lion-shaped Isandhlwana rears its rugged crest to the sky; and, looking on that stern defiant frontlet keeping its silent watch for ever over our fallen countrymen, I could not but

realise how grand a monumental stone Nature had provided, as though to shame the puny efforts of Art.

And Isandhlwana's stately crest its vigil eye will keep,
Guarding our brethren's peaceful rest, wrapt in their last long
sleep ;

Gigantic looms its rugged height crowned with a halo wreath,
As streams the pale moon's silver light o'er the weird plain
beneath,

Or at the close of scorching day, bathed in the summer mist,
Those iron walls by slanting ray of fading sunlight kissed ;
And the nightbird leaves his rocky nest with shrill and ghostly
scream,

As sinks afar in the purpling west the twilight's last faint
gleam.

When the deep thunder's angry tone peals through the blackened
sky,

Vivid around that summit lone the flame-winged arrows fly,
And the storm wind with a frightened whirl scuds through the
troubled air—

Seeming defiance back to hurl from his huge front'let bare,
There, in his towering grandeur piled, unmoved through calm
and storm,

Majestic o'er the lonely wild reigns that stern lion-form.
And fitter monument ne'er crowned the fallen soldier's grave,
Oft upon blazoned folds unwound floating o'er land and wave,
Emblem of Britain's might renowned, here watching o'er her
brave.¹

¹ From a poem by the author, contributed to the *Natal Mercury* on the third anniversary of the battle.

CHAPTER IX.

Hlubi—A trial-at-law—Native oratory—Sirayo's stronghold—The Ityotyози valley—A standstill and a snake—Visitors—An important institution—'Big tagati'—Where the Prince was killed—Sabuza—A beggar—The Queen's Cross—A kindly tribute—An old story retold.

THE scene of the Prince Imperial's death is about twenty miles from Isandhlwana as the crow flies, but by road nearly twice that distance; and having thoroughly 'done' the great battlefield, and the oxen being considerably set up by their long rest, we inspanned early one morning and took the road for the Ityotyози valley. The first halt was at St. Augustine's, a mission station in charge of the Rev. Charles Johnson, about thirteen miles from Isandhlwana and four from Rorke's Drift; but a change of weather coming on, with violent thunderstorms and heavy showers, I was detained two or three days, which gave me an opportunity of seeing Hlubi, the chief of the district, whose residence is close to the station.

At the termination of hostilities there was an

impression abroad that Zululand was to be kept for the Zulus exclusively, and that no part thereof would be taken from them under any pretence whatever: whether a statement to that effect was made by authority, my memory does not serve. Anyhow, a large slice of the country was given to this Hlubi, who is not a Zulu at all, but the head of a clan of Basutos living within the borders of Natal, who did good service on our side during the war. Whether another way might not have been found of rewarding a friend and ally than giving him territory to which he could have had no claim, may be a fair question; but, on the other hand, looking at the arrangement as simply one of policy, there can be no doubt as to the advantage of placing the district comprising the scene of the one great Zulu triumph, under an alien devoted to British interest. As a matter of fact the two border districts, from the Blood River to the Tugela mouth, are both ruled by chiefs whose interests are unmistakably identical with our own.

A middle-aged man, rather stout, with an intelligent face, dressed in velveteen jacket, tweed trousers, and flannel shirt, and with a general air of native well-to-do-ness, such is the chief Hlubi. His aspirations tend in the direction of comfort, for he lives in a substantial stone house with a verandah, and uses tables and chairs. Furthermore, he

drives his own trap, an American 'spider'—albeit given to loading up the same rather inordinately: for to drive seven full-grown persons in a vehicle constructed to seat four, *is* inordinate loading up. At the time of my arrival the chief was engaged in presiding over a 'trial-at-law,' so after we had exchanged civilities, he left me to resume his judicial seat. About fifty natives—Zulus and Basutos—were squatted round in a circle, with the defendants, six in number, in the centre; the 'court' was held in the open air, Hlubi being the only man who affected a chair, the others sitting on the ground tailor-fashion. There appeared to be 'counsel' on both sides: seeing, however, that three individuals would be talking all at once, both loud and fast—and can't a native talk—it struck me that the man who would determine the rights and wrongs of the case should be gifted with an extra judicial mind. An *indaba*¹ of this kind will often last for days. Once a native orator is on his legs (metaphorically, for the discussion is generally carried on squatting) it must be a very powerful diversion indeed that will arrest the stream of talk and gesture—the gesture denunciatory or explanatory, the gesture deprecatory or exultant, all play an important part in aboriginal speech-making. And yet no

¹ Palaver. The word is also used for conversation, 'news,' or any kind of talk.

one could brand that torrent of volubility with the ignominious term 'jabber,' for there is a wonderful grace about this pantomimic illustration—the grace and ease of a born orator—while the smooth, even flow of words, no less than the readiness of repartee, betokens a command of language which our trained speakers might well envy. A native is never at a loss; never at a moment's hesitation for an expression wherewith to convey his meaning: how poor and wanting in this respect is our unmelodious English compared with his facile tongue. But I suppose the man does not exist who, once upon his legs, more dearly loves to hear himself talk than the native of South Africa, be he Zulu or Xosa, Tembu or Basuto, or be he who he may.

In the trial I witnessed, the defendants were charged with resisting some of Hlubi's police: whether they were convicted or not I never heard.

Near St. Augustine's is Sirayo's¹ old stronghold, the scene of the first skirmish after the troops crossed into Zululand, and this I took occasion to visit. About an hour's ride brought us through the green valley of the Bashi, and after several

¹ Zulus cannot sound the letter 'r,' pronouncing it as 'h;' yet in their language it conveys something more than the ordinary sound of 'h,' more like 'ch' in the German word 'ich.' Thus it is pronounced in 'Sirayo.' Sometimes they pronounce it 'l,' as in their coined word 'umbulele,' umbrella.

tedious *détours* to get round a mealie field or to avoid a deep donga, we entered the steep stony defile leading to the truculent old chieftain's former abode. The morning was dark and lowering, heavy clouds completely veiling the *krantz*es (cliffs) and hill tops, while a constant and insinuating drizzle did its level best to render life exceedingly uncomfortable for the ambitious explorer. The site of the kraal, which was easily found, is on a ridge, or rather spur, overlooking the approaches from the valley on either side; the cattle enclosure still stands, and is girt by a solid stone wall, around which, and thickly overgrown with tangled weeds, are the clay floors of the huts, being all that remain of the same. On the other side of the ravine, in the rear, rises a huge wall of frowning cliff, along whose face clouds were driving in misty scud, the crags looming out stern and forbidding in their shadowy dimness; and here, amid the stones and clefts, Sirayo's followers made a futile stand against the hated invader.

A temporary lull in the downpour enabled us to compass a fire and some breakfast, which imparted a surprisingly brighter tint to things in general. Previously, what with the early start and the long wet ride, I was rather weary, and felt strongly sympathetic towards Nature in her abhorrence of a vacuum, which combination of dis-

comforts had set me wondering whether it was worth while going through so much to gain so little, as the charity boy is proverbially supposed to have said when he came to the end of the alphabet. The look-out, however, assumed a more cheerful hue after breakfast, and I was inclined to explore the rugged fastness in front, but the rain coming on again harder than ever, it was manifest that no good could be effected by slipping and tumbling about among slimy boulders and long wet grass; accordingly, saddling up, we took the homeward track.

As soon as the weather fairly cleared we started, and halting for the night on the heights near Itelezi, descended early next morning into the Ityotyoti, a clear stream whose sandy bed winds through grassy bottoms, where the track was anything but plain. Owing to its winding course the river has to be crossed several times, which, the drifts being nearly all more or less bad, is not an advantage. I arrived at one of these to find the waggon sticking fast, and the driver endeavouring, with a persistency worthy of a better cause, to upset the same. However, I was just in time to save its centre of gravity and avert the catastrophe, and after plying spade and pick for a few minutes, the offending wheel rolled reluctantly out of the hole, and we were on the move again. The next event came in

the shape of a big puff adder lying in the middle of the road, which Fani deftly slew with his long whip, looking hugely pleased with himself after the successful accomplishment of this feat. In fact he soon got hold of the idea that the destruction of all the snakes in Zululand was his particular mission, and, thereafter, whenever a serpent showed itself anywhere near our line of march, he effectually 'did for' that unwary reptile.

The surrounding country was green and undulating, and did not seem thickly populated, though a few kraals were scattered about here and there upon the plains. During the mid-day halt some Zulus paid me a visit at the waggon; the gift of a little tobacco (which is not used for smoking, but converted into snuff), and a few trifles, placed us at once on the best of terms, and they sat chatting away about the war and their own politics of the day as familiarly as if we had known each other all our lives.

Snuff-taking, by the way, constitutes an eventful item in the Zulu day's doings. It is in no wise to be engaged in lightly or hurried over, but must be attended with all the deliberate ceremonial which so important an undertaking demands. Is the would-be snuffer on his travels,—he does not take his 'pinch' while walking along. Oh no! He sits down by the roadside, gravely

extracts his snuffbox (either a bit of reed or a long tube of polished horn with a stopper) from the slit in the lobe of his ear where it is generally kept—I suppose because pockets are unknown conveniences to people the bulk of whose clothing consists of Nature's garb—pours a quantity of its contents into his bone snuff-spoon, if he has one, or into the hollow of his hand if he has not, and by a series of 'pinches' transfers every particle of the pungent mixture to his nasal cavities. Which operation completed, he sits for a few minutes in placid enjoyment of the results of his favourite indulgence; then, replacing his snuffbox in its auricular repository, starts on his way with the air of a man who has satisfactorily discharged a heavy responsibility towards himself and society at large. Three or four old men taking snuff together is a sight worth witnessing. The calm gravity, the sublime indifference to all earthly things depicted on each countenance during the operation is a study in itself. The use of snuff is not confined to age or sex, the women indeed being as fond of it as their lords; but the Zulus have never taken to the pipe, though the Kafirs on the Cape frontier, men and women alike, smoke ferociously, as do also many of the Natal natives.

But to return to our visitors. My field glass was a great source of diversion: they couldn't

understand how their own kraal, about a mile off, could be brought by its means within a few yards; nor how, on reversing the glass, the same object should appear far away on the horizon. But the climax of astonishment was reached when, unscrewing one of the ends, I used it as a burning glass and ignited paper and dry grass, finishing by lighting my long pipe therewith. One venturesome spirit went so far as to put his hand under the lens after some persuasion, but promptly saw good and sufficient reasons for withdrawing it, whereat the others laughed him to scorn. Nevertheless they shook their heads and thought that the man who could bring down fire from the sun to light his pipe with must be very big ‘tagati’¹ indeed.

I arrived on the scene of the Prince’s death at sundown. An old man who was driving cattle pointed out the spot, for the stone itself, being in a hollow, is not visible until you are right upon it. We outspanned about 500 yards from the enclosure, and almost before the oxen were clear of their yokes received a visit from the petty chief Sabuza and a few of his followers—it was on the site of this worthy’s former kraal that the unfortunate Prince and his party were offsaddled

¹ Sorcerer, or anything that is uncanny, corresponding to the North American Indian term ‘great medicine.’

when attacked. Sabuza is a quiet, good-humoured looking old customer, of sturdy build, and grey-headed, but an inveterate 'beggar' withal. I opened the proceedings by distributing 'gwai' (tobacco), and the Zulus, squatting down, prepared for a talk.

'What had I got to sell?' they were anxious to know. I explained that I was not a trader, but had come up there to see them and their country, and wanted to have a look at the Prince's monument. With a keen eye to the main chance, Sabuza struck in that he expected people to pay for the latter privilege, a notion which met with huge ridicule from me. The old man was evidently sensible of the *prestige* attaching to himself and his neighbourhood by the possession of such a 'lion,' and was resolved to make the most of it. I asked him if he kept the place in good order. 'Yes, he had told the white *inkosi*¹ that he would, and he did.' After some more talk they left, saying that it was late, and promising to return in the morning. Soon after their departure I strolled over to the monument. There it stood, white and calm in the moonlight; every word graven upon the cross as plainly readable as in broad daytime. I stepped within the silent

¹ Major Stabb and Colonel Bowker, on the occasion of the unveiling of the monument.



DAWSON, PHOTO-ST

WHERE THE PRINCE WAS KILLED

enclosure ; all around spoke of stillness and peace, as though I were standing on holy ground. And Ityotyози's limpid waters rippled on over their sandy bed, blending in tuneful murmur with the rustle of long grass ever and anon stirred by a faint zephyr ; blackly loomed the hills against the starlit sky, while a full moon hanging above in the clear vault of night shed a flood of silver radiance upon this quiet vale, where a promising life was laid low and the destiny of a great empire diverted. As I turned to leave the place a light twinkled redly forth from the dark hill side across the valley, and the sound of distant voices and laughter borne upon the night air seemed to bring one back to the everyday world.

In the morning Sabuza duly put in an appearance ; others came up in twos and threes, among them my cattle-driving friend of the previous evening, who rejoiced in the name of Mpunhla, bringing with him some green mealies culled for my special benefit. I have said that the old chief was an inveterate beggar ; the reader will judge whether he sustained that character when I say there was hardly a thing that he didn't ask for. He opened fire at once, first insinuating that I ought to give him a blanket, then ventured to suggest that a suit of clothes would add generally to his personal appearance. I replied that if there

was one reason more than another why I should have elected to be born a Zulu, that reason would be to avoid the necessity of wearing clothes in such weather as we were then experiencing. 'Wouldn't I give him a shirt?'—'No; I didn't carry articles of clothing to give away, they took up too much room in the waggon.' He came down in his demands at last to—a needle and thread, but I was obdurate; as long as he went on begging he should get nothing. However, I distributed some strips of coloured calico among the assembly, which they proceeded to tie round their heads with unconcealed satisfaction. The amount of gratification which, in Zululand, can be evoked by the bestowal of a few of the veriest trifles is refreshing to witness. A couple of inches of ordinary Boer tobacco places you on the friendliest footing with the average Zulu; give him a red handkerchief and he is happy; if you throw in a few brass buttons his countenance will beam with delight, while the donation of a coloured umbrella, the gaudier the better, will make him your debtor for life. I have more than once seen a burly barbarian, in all the scantiness of his native costume, striding along, as proud as Punch, beneath a big umbrella striped with more than the colours of the rainbow, and looking down from his fancied

elevation upon his less fortunate brethren who were without the coveted 'shelter-stick.' Lucifer matches, too, are greatly prized, being almost unknown except in the vicinity of a trading store. The native way of kindling a fire is by the friction of two bits of stick. A small hole is made in the side of one, into which the pointed end of the other is inserted and twirled quickly round between the hands until it smoulders and ignites the tinder.

In company with Sabuza and two or three of his men I explored the scene of the catastrophe. Looking up the Ityotyози valley, on the left is a long bare range beginning with the Mihlungwane, two round-headed green hills. On the right the ground slopes gradually down to the river, around which are fertile low-lying bottoms planted over with mealie fields; one of these now covers the site of Sabuza's old kraal where the party was first attacked. About a quarter of an acre of ground is walled in, and there is a small inner enclosure some twenty ft. by twelve ft., within which, at the head of a kind of rough altar tomb of piled stones, stands the 'Queen's Cross' upon a pedestal hewn from a solid block of native marble. The original wreath placed around the cross by the expedition, though much faded, is still intact, and a few other

wreaths in more or less withered condition lay about. The inscription, which I first read in the moonlight, runs in this wise:—

THIS
CROSS IS
ERECTED
BY
QUEEN VICTORIA
IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF
NAPOLEON EUGENE LOUIS
JEAN JOSEPH
PRINCE IMPERIAL
TO MARK
THE SPOT
WHERE WHILE
ASSISTING
IN A
RECONNAISSANCE
WITH THE
BRITISH
TROOPS
ON THE
1ST JUNE
1879
HE WAS
ATTACKED
BY A PARTY
OF ZULUS
AND FELL
WITH HIS
FACE TO THE
FOE

‘With his face to the foe.’ And now that the red tide of war has rolled back from the land,

that foe so merciless and unsparing in battle is foremost in honouring his memory. Fronting the entrance of the enclosure a plank stands upright in the ground on which is fixed a curiously wrought brass crucifix, bearing a dedicatory legend. The graves of the troopers of Bettington's Horse are behind the cross, and in the left-hand corner of the enclosure stands the original rough wooden tablet erected by the Royal Scots Fusiliers; the trees planted by the expedition are growing up, and the place is kept in wonderfully good order. It will be remembered that the monument was formally handed over by Major Stabb, the commander of the expedition, to Sabuza and his clan, who promised to take care of it, and right well has the old chief kept his word. When we entered the enclosure the Zulus stood for a moment, one after another, and raising the right hand above the head, gave the salute of honour—'Inkos!' which ceremony they told me was always gone through whenever they had occasion to visit the place. A graceful and kindly tribute this, to the memory of a fallen enemy. Who shall say that a fund of generosity does not lurk in the breasts of these dark children of the wilds, whom we are accustomed to look upon as a set of brutal, inhuman barbarians?

I was at some pains to get at the facts of the

whole affair, which, according to the story of Sabuza and his followers, were these. The Zulus who surprised the Prince numbered sixty men belonging to the Ngobamakosi, Umbonambi, and Nokenke regiments—a scouting party, in fact. The presence of white men was reported by one of the number, who, from a peak overlooking the valley, directly opposite the scene of the catastrophe, had seen the Prince's party offsaddle at the kraal. Thereupon the whole body moved stealthily down a deep donga opening into the Ityotyози; gaining the river they crept along beneath its high banks, and advanced upon the unsuspecting group under cover of the standing corn. Those fatal ten minutes! But for that disastrous delay the Prince would have been alive now. The savages were scarcely in position when the word was given to mount, but fearing lest their prey should escape them after all, they made the attack. A hurried volley; a wild shout; and the rout was complete. One of the troopers was unable to mount his horse, that of the other was shot; but the Prince still had hold of his—a large grey—which plunged and reared, becoming quite unmanageable. 'We fired again,' said my informant, 'and charged forward, shouting "Usútu." The big horse broke away, and ran after the other white men who were riding off as fast as they could, round the slope. He fought

hard when we came up to him ; the scuffle with the horse had brought him here (about 150 yards from where the attack was made). The first man to stab him was Xamanga ; he belonged to the Umbonambi regiment, and was afterwards killed in the battle of Nodwengu.¹ We did not know at the time who the Prince really was, but thought he was an English *induna*. His sword was taken to Cetywayo.'

The bones of the trooper's horse were still lying near where that of the Prince broke away, but other traces of the sad affair were there none. Although at first blush it would seem that had the object of the party been to court surprise and attack, no better spot could have been chosen, yet the face of the country is so deceptive, having all the appearance of being open and devoid of cover, that those unacquainted with it might more readily be taken in. As a matter of fact, however, the long grass and numerous dongas afford ample cover for a lurking foe, who, taking advantage of the fields of standing corn and the winding bed of the river, could advance unseen upon almost any point, within an incredibly short space of time.

At the close of the day's proceedings old

¹ Or Ulundi. Zulus always call it the battle of Nodwengu, because fought nearest the kraal of that name.

Sabuza and his followers were rendered happy by sundry donations, and I made a speech on a small scale, saying I should tell the English *inkosi* how well the monument was being looked after, which announcement seemed greatly to please them. I told Sabuza that I wanted to leave at early dawn, and must have some one to pilot me into the main road to Isipezi, as the track was very indistinct and the country seamed with fissures. He, however, said he would go himself, and promised to be with me long before sunrise. But when morning came there was no sign of anyone; so, not in the best of humours at being 'done,' I gave orders to inspan, wondering how the deuce we should manage to find the way, seeing that the grass was breast high and there was no semblance of a track. However, before we had gone many hundred yards Mpunhla put in an appearance, just in the nick of time, too, for we were already beginning to go wrong. He had seen me start, he said, and that none of the people were with me; it was not good that an *inkos* should leave them without anyone to show him the road; accordingly, he had come after me with that object, and lucky was it for me that he did. I took quite a fancy to the old fellow—so quiet and pleasant mannered, never asking for anything, but very pleased if any little trifle was

given him. He told me that his fighting days were over, but I could not help thinking that he would have been a tough customer in his time, for he was a finely made man yet. How carefully he steered us through bad drifts and over the smoothest ground—walking alongside for miles, chatting and pointing out all the landmarks far and near, till, after two hours' travelling, we struck the road. When, lo and behold ! who should come trotting up but old Sabuza, trying to look as if he had piloted us all the way. The old humbug !

CHAPTER X.

The Upoko valley—A rencontre—Traders and trade—Mehlo-ka-zulu
—The biter bit—Zulu honesty—A Briton and his growl.

TOWARDSEVENING we began to descend into the Upoko valley. Hitherto the country had been open and treeless, now it became more rugged ; large masses of rock were littered about the undulating plains, and a long bushy range of hills rose on the opposite side of the valley. The open country, with its rolling ‘steppes’ of billowy grass tossing in the breeze, has a certain charm of its own—even then it must be seen with the sun upon it and the blue sky overhead ; on a wet or cloudy day the effect is depressing in the extreme—but the bush country is more pleasing to the eye and more alive with all the varieties of bird, beast, and insect. Just as we reached the bottom of the valley another waggon appeared on the crest of the hill in front, which turned out to be that of a trader. The rencontre of a waggon in that wild country where for days I had not seen the face of a compatriot was like

speaking a ship on the lonely sea. We exchanged civilities and agreed to outspan together and make a night of it.

The trader is quite an institution in Zululand, albeit there is but scope for an extremely limited number. Loading up his waggon with articles likely to be in request—such as blankets, knives, umbrellas, Salampore cloth (a kind of blue gauzy fabric much worn by the native women), tobacco, snuff, beads, &c., the man crosses the border. Perhaps he is fitted out by a storekeeper, in which case he gets a percentage on the profits, or the waggonload is entirely his own affair. He is away two, three, or four months, according to the number of his waggons, the success he meets with, or the route by which he travels. It is indispensable that he should be well acquainted with the native language; furthermore, he must be firm and businesslike in all his dealings, for the Zulu is a hard nail at a bargain, and will always try to get as much and give as little as he can. Hides, horns, and live cattle generally form the staple articles of barter; coin of the realm being scarce, and but little understood in Zululand. The habitual trader is well known to the chiefs, whom he takes care to propitiate with judicious gifts from time to time, an important item in the programme. He goes from kraal to kraal, living among the natives and

frequently on native fare. The best trader, too, is the man who combines tact with courage and resolution. For, although a traveller may pass through the length and breadth of the land, and meet with nothing but kind and civil treatment, with the trader the case is different; it is often considered quite legitimate to overreach him if possible; and any potentate in whose bad books he happens to figure may be inclined to make things warm for him. The trip over, he returns to Natal, his wagon emptied of the goods he carried up with him, but, in their place, loaded with hides, buckskins, horns, a little ivory perhaps—anything that will find a market in the colony—and driving along with him a choice herd of sleek Zulu cattle. All of which he disposes of, either to buy a fresh load and start off again, or to return to his farm; for some combine trading with their ordinary farming pursuits, taking a periodical trip into Zululand; others again do nothing else, having stores established in various parts of the country in addition to their itinerary traffic.

While we were outspanning, I noticed a slight stir among the 'boys,' the name 'Mehlo-ka-zulu' passing from mouth to mouth. Looking up, I saw a tall, clean-limbed native coming towards us, swinging his kerrie as he moved through the grass with an easy gliding run, two or three rough

lurcher-like mongrels at his heels. With the usual greeting 'Saku bona'¹ he sat down, panting after his run, and began a brisk confabulation with the trader. I looked with considerable interest at this man, one of the principal factors in the bringing on of the war. It may be worth while recapitulating the circumstances. In July '78, six months before the declaration of hostilities, one of Sirayo's wives fled from her lord and master, and took refuge in Natal. She was followed by a party under the leadership of Mehlo-ka-zulu and Nkumbi-ka-zulu, Sirayo's eldest and second sons, recaptured in the Umsinga division, brought back into Zululand, and there put to death according to Zulu law and custom. The old chief appears to have been unfortunate in his domestic relations, for, shortly after this, another of his spouses suddenly preferred living in Natal. Again Mehlo-ka-zulu came forward to vindicate the honour of his father's house, and led another armed band across the border; the second recalcitrant wife was seized and taken back to Zululand, where she met with the same fate as the first. These little escapades, however justifiable in Zulu eyes, were none the less distinct violations of British territory, to answer for which the persons of Sirayo's two sons and one of his brothers were demanded by the High

¹ Literally 'I have seen you.'

Commissioner. Had they been given up it is difficult to see what punishment could have been meted out to them ; the slaughter of the women in both instances having taken place in Zululand was as effectually beyond the cognisance of colonial courts as if it had taken place in Siberia, no penalty being provided by the criminal law of Natal for the violation of territory. The war ended, Mehloka-zulu surrendered to the Secretary for Native Affairs, and after a brief imprisonment at Maritzburg was allowed to return home, as anyone who gave the matter a moment's thought might have foreseen would be the case.

Mehloka-zulu is a fine, well-made man, of about five or six-and-twenty, with an intelligent face and brisk, lively manner. A sub-chief of the Ngobamakosi regiment and a good shot, he is much looked up to by his younger compatriots as a spirited and daring warrior, but among traders and border men he enjoys the reputation of being an irreclaimable scamp, and many a bit of sharp practice is laid to his account, of which the following story may serve as a specimen. I said that Sirayo's residence, previous to the war, was within a few miles of the border, over which at that time horses and cattle took to straying in rather an unaccountable manner, to be sent back with a heavy claim from Sirayo for damages to mealie

gardens or something—frequently, too, never returning at all, and, rightly or wrongly, the old chieftain's enterprising sons were credited with these disappearances. Now it happened that a border farmer lost a horse which he at length ascertained to be at Sirayo's kraal. Knowing his man, he sent and offered Sirayo 1*l.* if he would find (?) the horse for him, to which the chief agreed. Time, however, slipped by and the animal was not forthcoming, but our friend Mehlo-ka-zulu was, and proceeded to inform the aggrieved colonist that his father thought 1*l.* too little ; they could not get the people to turn out for so small a consideration ; and that he must give a lot of things in addition, among which blankets and 'squareface' (Hollands gin) figured largely. But while negotiations were in progress, one of the farmer's native servants contrived to let his master know that the missing quadruped was concealed just across the river close at hand. Of course he received instructions to go through quietly and take it, which feat being successfully accomplished, the naturally incensed settler turned upon Mehlo-ka-zulu, telling him that as he had promised Sirayo 1*l.* he would keep his word, but that he, Mehlo-ka-zulu, was an infernal scoundrel, and, for the rest, the sooner he took himself off the better. I believe there was nearly a battle royal

on the spot between the two, but be that as it may, the wily savage must have returned to his 'native heath' feeling wondrously small.

Whether growth in years, martial experiences, or subsequent intercourse with Europeans have diminished or eradicated scampish proclivities in this young warrior I am unable to say; one thing, though, I can say, which is that his reception of me when I visited him at his own kraal was all that was courteous and friendly. However sharp in his dealings the Zulu may be with trader or border resident, my experience of him as a traveller is all in his favour. More than once have I returned to the waggon, after leaving it alone and unprotected for some hours, to find several natives squatting round awaiting my return, pointing out to each other such of its contents as were visible, which contents they knew to consist of the very articles most prized by themselves, yet not a thing was touched. A fool, wasn't I, for making the experiment? Granted; but having made it, I like now to look back upon such an instance of spontaneous honesty on the part of these untaught barbarians towards a stranger alone in their midst, as if they had said, 'He trusts us and so he may.' If the fact of the Zulu being given to sharp practice, even at times bordering on rascality, in a bargain be cited as nullifying his other good qualities, I

would simply ask if our own commercial mercury is exceptionally exalted.

I believe that, save in actual war time, any Englishman may go all over Zululand alone and unarmed with perfect safety, provided he is friendly and courteous towards the natives; in short, provided he behaves as a gentleman, and none more readily detect any flaw in such behaviour than they. But the 'Jack and "baas"' ¹ style of intercourse with the colonial natives does not go down among the Zulus, who, if treated with ordinary courtesy, are the last people to presume; at least such is my experience. Let this fact speak for itself. I travelled through the greater part of the country alone with my Natal 'boys,' and not one instance of distrust or hostility did I meet with.

To return to our camp. Bargaining was going on in a spirited manner, apparently, from the talking and gesticulation, and yards of Salampore cloth were being unrolled and measured, doubtless to deck the lithe figure of some swarthy nymph whom the chief's son contemplated adding to his sufficiently liberal allowance of spouses. I was anxious to enter into conversation with him when the 'deal' should be over, but meanwhile was rummaging in my waggon for something or other.

¹ A Dutch word meaning 'master.'

On emerging thence I found he was gone, and could descry his dusky form disappearing in the fast falling shadows of evening—he probably elate at having got on the blind side of the trader, this worthy, on the other hand, chuckling over having ‘made’ out of him. At the same time I am under the impression that in matters of ordinary trade—by ordinary trade I exclude fire-arms and liquor—the dealings are fair enough. If the trader gets a wide profit, it must be remembered that he undergoes considerable risk. His waggon may come to grief, his oxen may sicken and die, his servants may take it into their heads to desert him, and so on. Then, too, he has to bring the goods up there, and is working his waggon and oxen; moreover, he has to feed his servants and pay them a high rate of wages, none the less so for accompanying him across the somewhat dreaded border. On the other hand, the articles in which he deals, though of small value in Natal, are greatly prized and sought after by the Zulus; wherefore a bargain which would border upon a swindle if effected in the colony, is fair enough in Zululand, taking into consideration the outlay and the risk. Added to which, both parties are thoroughly well able to look after their own interests.

These traders are a curious class, and my friend was not the least curious of them. It

was a glorious moonlight night, and as we sat over our fried rashers and black coffee, while our respective retinues fraternised round their fire—for be it ever so warm the natives always like a fire to sit round at night—he poured out his grievances. He had but a poor opinion of the Zulus as a people; they were liars, thieves, and braggarts, and I would be sure to find it out before I had got much further. Once when his servants had all deserted him, they (the Zulus) had promised to find some one to replace them and drive his waggon, but instead of doing so had deliberately left him in the lurch. Then, again, they were always bragging about Isandhlwana; indeed, he had had a row with this very Mehlo-ka-zulu on that account. I ventured to remark that my experiences of them had been favourable hitherto, and that having had plenty of opportunities of pilfering from me, yet they had refrained from doing so.

‘Oh, that was all very well, but if I were only to take stock of my goods and chattels I should miss a lot of things.’

I did not, however, miss anything, then or at any future time, but was ready to allow for the grievances of a man who probably had an uphill struggle for it in order to keep his family decently, for he told me he had a wife and four children in Natal. Doubtless, too, his experiences in Zulu

traffic had not been all plain sailing ; furthermore, being an Englishman he must have his growl. We sat up chatting over our pipes till the moon was high overhead. When I awoke next morning my friend the trader was gone, and I could make out the white tent of his waggon moving along against the green hillside some distance off. He was not half a bad fellow at bottom, and I sincerely hope he may have many and many a successful trip under more favourable circumstances.

CHAPTER XI.

An 'afternoon call'—Kraal etiquette—Zulu hospitality—Native mode of slaughtering cattle—The story of a clever shot—Zulu opinion of artillery—'Ubain-bai'—Sirayo—General feeling with regard to Cetywayo.

SIRAYO'S kraal lies, one of a group, on the banks of the Upoko river, at the foot of a long round-topped range of hills, and thither when the heat of the day had somewhat abated did Andries and I take our way.

Passing an old military camp, with its tent marks and low crumbling earthwork, we crossed the rocky bed of the stream. A couple of hundred yards further we came upon a rather slovenly collection of huts, and were received by the usual pack of mongrels yapping around; these having been speedily and forcibly pacified I inquired for the chief, and was told he was out but would be back soon. As I did not want to miss seeing him, I promised to call again in returning, and meanwhile adjourned to his son's kraal, which was only a few hundred yards off. Here I was more fortu-

nate, as I found Mehlo-ka-zulu at home. He was seated against the fence of the cattle kraal under the shade of a dried bullock hide fixed on a couple of sticks above his head, and as we came up, the barking of curs brought a number of faces belonging to women and children to the doors of the huts, to have a peep at 'umlúngu' (the white man), a somewhat rare animal in those parts. Dismounting I walked up to Mehlo-ka-zulu, and took a seat on the ground by his side. 'Saku bona!' said he, with a pleased smile, evidently recognising me from our meeting the evening before. I replied in due form, and began to start a conversation.

On visiting a kraal the etiquette observed is as follows. You ride up; the chief man, or anyone else who receives you, looks you up and down for a few moments and then greets you with 'Saku bona' (literally 'I have seen you'), to which you reply 'Yeh bo' (Yes, indeed). He either asks you to come into a hut then, or when you have stated your business. The first question is nearly always, 'Where do you come from?' It is contrary to etiquette to go into anyone's hut armed or to hold a weapon in your hand while talking; wherefore, if you have a gun with you, you leave it outside, or if the conversation is held in the open air you put it down. The meaning of which is, of course, that sitting with a weapon in your hand implies distrust

of your host. It is also considered bad manners to go into or out of a hut backwards, or to stop when half way through the door and go out again. When food or drink is offered you it is always tasted first by your entertainer or some one belonging to him; you may, however, decline it without giving offence, provided of course you do not manifest any sign of disgust with regard to its preparation, or the preliminary sip, if of a fastidious turn. It is sufficient to say you have only just broken your fast, or have not acquired a liking for sour milk or 'tywala,' or any reasonable excuse will do. On taking your leave you say, 'Hlala gahlé' ('Rest quietly,' or 'nicely'), to which they reply 'Yeh bo, hamba gahlé' ('Yes, indeed; go quietly'). I used generally to shake hands with the chief men on arrival at a kraal; it pleased them immensely and placed matters on a friendly footing at once.

When we had talked a little, Mehlo-ka-zulu rising, proposed that we should adjourn to his hut. Now my experience of the domicile of the Cape frontier Kafir—its greasiness, smoke, and squalor—I had not yet been into a Zulu hut—prompted me instinctively to decline the proffered hospitality, saying it was cooler outside: a shocking fiction, for it was something more than broiling as I sat there, nor was the bullock's skin large enough to

shelter me too. It wouldn't do, however, I was evidently expected to comply ; so, going on all fours, crept through the aperture with the best grace I could muster. Once inside I was agreeably surprised ; instead of the 'fugginess' and grease I had been resigning myself to, the atmosphere was delightfully cool after the fierce heat of the summer afternoon ; the hard clay floor was beautifully polished and everything scrupulously clean. A few mats lay about, and blankets rolled neatly up and placed on one side. Several dangerous looking assegais and kerries were arranged upon a rack, while a 'mútya' of leopard skin, denoting the rank of its wearer as a chief's son and a warrior of some standing, hung from a peg.

The 'mútya' is a kind of small square apron worn by every Zulu, and generally constituting his sole attire. Suspended from the loins it is in two pieces, the one in front ordinarily made of Zanzibar cats' tails, the other consisting of a bit of square hide, or in the case of chiefs and men of rank, of leopard skin. This last, however, is worn as part of the regimental dress in actual war time or on the occasion of a review, at other times the ordinary bit of hide. In cold weather—and it *can* be cold in those parts during the winter months or during a spell of rains, as I have already found occasion to show—the Zulu wraps himself in

an ample green woollen blanket, for, though hardy by constitution, he can shiver at times, and, moreover, is not indifferent to the comforts of a bright fire and a warm hut while the biting wind howls outside.

The Zulu hut is a dome-shaped structure made of dry grass woven into thatch and stretched upon a framework of sticks, the outside being usually covered with grass mats. The floor is of hard clay, and, being continually polished with smooth round stones, shines like glass ; a small hollow in the centre constitutes the fireplace, and one or more poles, according to the size of the hut, support the roof. The structure is entered by a small arched aperture, just large enough to enable a man to crawl through on all fours, in front of which is a palisade, or rather screen, of mat or wattle ; the original idea of so small an entrance way being that of protection against wild beasts.

Handing me a wooden 'pillow'¹ for a seat, Mehlo-ka-zulu threw himself upon a mat and settled himself comfortably for a talk. One of his wives brought in a large calabash of 'tywala' and a bucket of clear spring water : with the latter all the drinking vessels were carefully washed, then, frothing up a calabash about a pint and a half in

¹ The sleeper rests with his neck or cheek upon this implement, to avoid lying on or injuring his head-ring.

capacity, my host handed it to me after the usual courtesy sip, and filled a clay bowl for himself. Andries and two or three men who had dropped in making themselves happy with another jorum.

To my inquiries as to how he was getting on since the war, Mehlo-ka-zulu replied that it hadn't made much difference to him individually; his father had been a powerful chief but now was nobody, and had been driven out of his former country. Still they managed to live.

‘Did he regret having fought?’

‘No, he couldn't exactly say that; he was a young man and wanted to prove himself a warrior. He had been in all the principal engagements: Isandhlwana, Kambúla, and Ulundi, and now he wanted to “sit still.”’

‘Always?’

‘Well, that he couldn't say either; he liked a fight now and then; there was no mistake about it. As to whether he had killed many men at Isandhlwana, he supposed he must have killed some one, but there was a great deal of confusion.’

Now this answer was evasive, for I subsequently heard that he had rather distinguished himself in the battle in question. As a rule, however, no Zulu will own to having actually killed anyone with his own hand, thinking such admission would be offensive; and so far from being ready to brag

about their successes, I invariably found the reverse tendency to prevail; in fact, tough, wiry looking warriors, just the most likely fellows to have played the deuce among our ranks, are the very ones who will most readily disclaim having killed anyone in battle. Who shall say there is not something chivalrous in this consideration for an enemy's feelings?

‘Well, now, what did he think of Maritzburg?’

‘Not much;’ and, with a smile full of meaning, ‘how easy it would have been for an *impi* to “eat up” the place and kill everybody in it. They could begin at Mkunkundhlovwane (Grey Town) in the morning and finish with Mkunkundhlovu (Maritzburg) in the evening.’ In fact he had, previously to seeing it, pictured the capital to himself as far larger and more imposing than it really was.

I told him I had just seen the place where the Prince was killed.

‘Yes, he remembered the affair, and was sorry when he heard of it. That wasn’t the way to kill a man, to creep up to him in the grass and shoot him. Zulus ought to meet their enemies in the open, in fair fight, as they did us at Isandhlwana, and at Kambúla, and again at Nodwengu; then so much the worse for whoever was beaten, but the way in which the Prince had been killed was not good.’

There spoke the brave man and the warrior;

and certainly the genuineness of his enunciation seems borne out by the line of action practised by the Zulus throughout the campaign.

Presently a large piece of beef was brought in, which I was told it was intended I should take away with me, whereat Andries' eyes glistened as he thought of many a succulent stew to be concocted during the evening outspan. In fact it fed my retinue for several days, but did not look sufficiently inviting to tempt me, for the Zulus do not bleed their meat after the manner of English butchers, consequently it has a raw and uninviting appearance, even when done to a turn. The way in which they go to work is thus. The ox destined for slaughter is driven into the cattle kraal with several others; a man then goes up to the doomed animal, and with one swift and sure stroke plunges an assegai into its heart—it falls, and they sit round until it has ceased to move, when the work of skinning and quartering begins. During which process, by the way, the Zulus do not show in a pleasant or prepossessing light; indeed, a lot of them round a freshly slaughtered beast remind one of nothing so much as a herd of vultures. Sometimes the slaughterer makes a bad shot, missing the vital part, in which case the animal not unfrequently turns upon its would-be destroyer, promptly clearing the enclosure of all human

occupants. I once saw a man thus 'chevvied' by a cow he had stabbed, and only escape being gored and seriously injured by sheer nimbleness and agility. Then they stood upon the wall and flung assegais at the hapless bovine, till they brought it down.

To return to my story. My entertainer was delighted with the gift of a red handkerchief to put on his head, and some strings of blue and white beads, which I afterwards saw him distributing among the ladies of his harem—he told me he had ten spouses—and as Sirayo had not returned, I suggested we should go to the waggon, and perhaps might find him there. Passing the old camp mentioned above, Mehlo-ka-zulu stopped, and began to 'spin a yarn.' When the troops were there a skirmish took place between them and some Zulus on the other side of the river; but what he wanted to tell me was that while a 'war-doctor' was performing his incantations there, a well-directed shell from the camp dropped into the middle of the group, cutting the luckless wizard clean in half.

He pointed out the spot, right away among the thorns, nearly a mile off; and to this day they believe that that shot was intended exclusively for the 'doctor's' benefit.

The Zulus have a very wholesome dread of the

effectiveness of 'Ubaïn-baï' (cannon). As this is the name by which artillery is known throughout the country, it may not be amiss to give the origin of the word, which is rather an amusing one.

Well, then, formerly at Maritzburg a gun was fired at 8 A.M., the hour when all native servants and labourers were expected to be at their work. After a while the time of gunfire was altered to 9, but 'Jack,' who has some idea of time, though none of punctuality, still persisted in sticking to the old hour, and from sheer force of habit would go to his master for his daily task. The 'baas,' however, would put him off: 'Don't bother me now, come *by-and-by*—when the gun fires!'

'What does he say?' would be the inquiry of an expectant group when their spokesman returned.

'He says, "Come *by-and-by*."'

Directly the expected detonation was heard, nearly every native throughout the city would exclaim 'Haow! Ubaïn-baï!' and betake himself to his work. The expression stuck, and forthwith the gun became 'Ubaïn-baï' among the native population of Natal, extending thence to Zululand. Some bold spirits have asserted that the expression owes its origin to the time that elapses between the report and the bursting of the shell. Not bad—but rather too deep and far-

fetched an idea to take root so readily in the Zulu mind, and there is no doubt about the former being the real origin of the word.

Resuming our way, we soon came upon Sirayo and a few followers, sitting down in the grass. From what I had heard of the old chief—his deep-rooted hostility to us before the war, and his anti-English proclivities generally, I expected to see a grim, scowling savage; instead whereof, I beheld an urbane, jovial-looking old Zulu advancing to meet me with outstretched hand, and grinning from ear to ear. Looking at him I thought of the West African potentate, described as in full dress in a cocked hat and pair of spurs. His South African brother, however, was less aspiring, and rejoiced in a head-ring and a pair of boots (of course not omitting the inevitable ‘mútya’), for the pedal extremities of this worthy were cased in a huge pair of bluchers, which, he being a great sufferer from gout, seemed about the worst line of adornment he could have struck out in. The old fellow lumbering along (he is enormously fat), with a barbed assegai in his hand, and trying to look as if he were not on hot bricks, cut a slightly ridiculous figure. It did not require much persuasion to induce him to turn back with us, and speedily the whole group was squatting in front of the waggon in high good humour.

I began by telling him I had been to look at his old home near Rorke's Drift.

'Yes,' he said, 'he had been turned out of his country, and was an outcast; a new chief, Hlubi, had been put in his place. He was an old man now, and couldn't go wandering about in search of new locations; all his cattle had been taken, and he was quite poor, and glad to live quietly where he could.'

'Did he know Mr. Johnson, the missionary?'

'Oh, yes; Johnson used to be his friend, now he was Hlubi's friend, and Hlubi had driven him (Sirayo) out of his territory (the inference being plain). Why didn't we bring back Cetywayo? What could we want to keep him for? Had we killed him?'

I explained that the King was well cared for in his captivity, but that as to the possibility of his restoration I could tell them nothing, being merely a private person.

'Well,' said he, 'give us back Cetywayo, and the country will be happy again; or, anyhow, bring him so that we can only see that he is alive and well.'

Sirayo was always a crony of the King's, one of his most trusted *indunas* in fact; his son, Mehlo-ka-zulu, being also a great favourite. Wherever I went I found the same state of feeling;

all the old chiefs loyally attached to the exiled King, and desiring his return. Always the same story: 'Bring us back the King!' This feeling is also shared by the bulk of the people; and when ultimately I left the country it was with the impression that Cetywayo was that day the most popular man in Zululand.

After some more talk my visitors left, the chief and his son happy in the acquisition of a big knife apiece; and a few trifles distributed among their followers sent me up like a rocket in their estimation. Poor old Sirayo, I could not help feeling sorry for him, though I am bound to say that his misfortunes were mainly brought upon his own head by his anything but immaculate conduct in general. But the war was over now, and resentment had had time to cool. An outcast, where formerly he had been powerful and respected; his cattle gone; one of his sons killed in battle; an alien reigning in his stead; his friend and benefactor a captive and an exile, and himself old, sick, and broken-down. Yes, I think one could afford to pity him.

CHAPTER XII.

A thunderstorm and a novel cistern—'Arrival of the mail'—A comfortable night—Matyana's kraal—Pastoral scene—The last new thing in shields.

A LONG night 'trek' brought us into the main road again, and at daybreak I started Andries off to fetch the post from Isandhlwana (for there is a post office agency at Rorke's Drift, and the mail, in the shape of a Zulu with a bag, runs to the Bishop's twice a week) about fifteen miles across country, and then, making a short march, crossed the Upoko, and outspanned to await his return, which would hardly be before nightfall. Opposite rose the cliffs and steep slopes of Isipezi mountain, and on the right the cone of Inhlabamakosi; beneath, a wild open valley, not a bush or tree to relieve the general air of desolation; a kraal or two, with its cultivated mealie patch, and a few cattle grazing around, were the only signs of life, and the oppressiveness of a dull leaden day seemed rather enhanced than dispelled by periodical showers of rain, which imparted a steamy dampness to the

sultry atmosphere. Ever and anon from the westward came the muffled roar of distant thunder, and more and more distinctly, lurid gleams were forking amidst the inky blackness which hung like a pall over the far landscape. I could see that, unless the wind changed, we were in for a violent thunderstorm, which in these open regions, on an exposed hillside, with little or nothing to draw off the force of the lightning, is not exactly a joke. A brooding stillness had fallen upon everything till it seemed that you might have heard a whisper a mile off: the darkness spread, louder and louder rolled up each thunder-peal, nearer and more vivid flashed the lightning, and a spot or two of rain the size of a crownpiece warned that it was time to make all snug, and promptly; for already the lightning was glinting weirdly along the huge dark *krantzies* (cliffs) of Isipezi, and fierce thunder tones sounded forth loud and menacing, echoing each long-drawn roll in a hundred rocky reverberations, to die away sullenly among the distant heights. Scarcely had we time to unhook the trek-chain and fasten down the sail of the waggon-tent when the storm burst in all its fury. Peal after peal in deafening succession; steely, vivid flashes, almost scorching in their nearness, following so close upon each other that everything seemed fairly bathed in a sea of red and blue flame. Then a lull

—a few instants of deathly stillness, only broken by the heavy patter of a rain-drop or two on the waggon tent; it is dark as night, a silence that may be felt. Crash! bang!—an appalling roar—a dazzling sheetiness, and the ground reels. Has the earth been suddenly cleft in twain? No, the fluid has only struck something, probably a rock; it was a near shave though, and I don't care how few more such experiences I get. But the storm seems to have exhausted its violence in that last frightful crash, the thunderclaps, though frequent, have lost *verve*, down comes the rain, literally in spouts, the danger is over, and the storm-king rushes off with sullen roar along the ridge.

And now I have to turn attention to more commonplace matters, for the waggon tent evinces an unworthy desire to emulate the distinctive features of a well-ordered sieve; in plain English, the canvas, having been so long dry, proceeds to leak abominably. Basins, pannikins, mackintoshes, are all pressed into the service, but no—the confounded thing breaks out in a fresh place, till at last, sit where I will, a growing spout drops its miserable trickle on to my longsuffering head. Necessity, we are told, is the mother of invention, wherefore, being blessed with two hats, I caved in the crown of one which I cram on over the other, and allow the water to trickle at its own sweet will

into the hollow thus formed. Fancy being driven to making a cistern of your hat, and carrying the said reservoir on your summit ! But you are driven into queer straits in the wilds. However, this did not last long, the leakage ceasing as soon as the canvas became fairly saturated.

Fani and Mlamvu, who have been sitting huddled up in their blankets, stolidly waiting for the storm to pass, now turn out, but it is raining steadily, and seems likely so to continue throughout the night ; for there is not a break in the dull wrack which envelopes the earth in its darkening shivery folds, while the ground, which an hour ago was hard as adamant, is now ankle deep in mire. No chance of lighting a fire to-night, everything is thoroughly saturated, so I turn in to the waggon and make the best of it, which ends in my falling off into a doze. Presently I wake up with a start. It is pitch dark and raining heavily, the canvas is lifted, and a round black head appears, bisected by a double row of 'ivories' as its owner's mouth expands into the broadest of grins. It is Andries with the post. A good fellow that ! Why should he not, seeing what sort of a night it was going to be, have turned snugly in at some kraal by the way-side, and come on in the morning ? I could not have blamed him. But no—he knew I wanted the post, so trudged on for hours through the rain

and darkness in order that I might get it as soon as possible. A good, faithful fellow! And I sat reading my letters by the dim light of a swinging lantern in the waggon-tent, away in the wilds of Zululand, pitchy darkness outside, and the rain driving against the far from substantial shelter. What a night it was; with one of those sudden changes peculiar to the much belauded South African climate, it had become horribly cold, everything in the way of bedding was wet, so I had to sleep in my clothes, in a half-sitting posture. Sleep did I say? Not much of that; it was a case of shivering till dawn, and then a 'double' up and down the miry road to infuse a little circulation into my benumbed limbs.

Towards mid-day, the ground having dried somewhat, we were on the move again, traversing a wide expanse of open plain; Ibabanango, a conical mountain, towering up, over a thousand feet, on the left. The day was cool, and the oxen stepped out briskly. A few hours of steady travelling brought us to the Umhlatusi: bumping down a sudden and rough descent we crossed the river, which at that point is easily fordable, and outspanned, but only for a short time, for the long steep hill on the other side of the valley must be left behind by nightfall, and the sun is beginning to dip already. High up on the mountain side we

pass the principal kraal of the chief, Matyana-ka-Mondisi, into which is being driven a herd of fine cattle, whose sleek hides glisten in the setting sun. It being late I give that worthy the go-by, otherwise should have stopped to have a talk with him. On reaching the brow of the ascent I look back. Great hills, now purple in the fast fading light, throw out their round, jutting spurs abruptly into the valley, the big kraal beneath is alive with animation, the shouts of the boys in the cattle enclosure mingling with the deep voices of its occupants, while now and again a resentful low rises above the rest as some recalcitrant beast finds its arrangements interfered with to suit those of its owners. Far below, the river winds through the valley like a streak of silver, and the grassy slopes beyond are specked with the dappled hides of many a herd wending its way to the kraals dotted about here and there; the shout and whistle of the drivers coming up clear upon the still air. And the roseate glow in the west grows fainter and fainter, melting into the purple and then the grey of an evening sky; stars peep forth; behind, the towering peak of Iabatanango fades into gathering gloom, and the hush of night sinks upon hill and valley. Passing along the summit of the lofty ridge we halt a little beyond Fort Evelyn.

From Fort Evelyn to Kwamagwaza the country

is hilly and broken, and the road in consequence very winding. Far down on the northern side lies the valley of the White Umfolosi and the Mahlabatini plain, the site of Ulundi and Nodwengu and the other great kraals ; southward the wild broken country stretches away to the Natal border, while behind can be seen the distant head of Isandhlwana peering up faint and blue on the horizon. A pleasant landscape, open, sunny, and smiling. Herds of cattle graze upon the hillsides, kraals are to be seen everywhere, boldly perched upon a spur or nestling in a sheltered valley, and mealie patches show in greener contrast upon the sufficiently verdant slopes ; for it is well watered is this fair land, and the tall grass sways in billowy masses to the breeze. No, there is nothing *mediocre* or tame about the scene. The bold spurs fall abruptly in sudden, well-nigh perpendicular slopes ; the valleys, beginning in dark narrow ravines soon to spread out and lose themselves in a broad smiling plain, are picturesque with the fantastic dwelling-places of their wild inhabitants ; and sharp outlines of the mountain ranges, with here and there a jagged peak, cleave the blue sky-line in the far distance. Such is the panorama spread on either side, as we sit in the shade of the waggon one fine morning on a high ridge some fourteen miles beyond Fort Evelyn.

But the sound of deep voices and the rattle of assegai handles betoken new arrivals, and dropping their weapons in the grass, three tall Zulus stride up, and, with their open stately salute, 'Inkos,' raising the right hand above the head, squat themselves on the ground at my side. Let us look at my visitors. Two of them are middle-aged men from 5ft. 10 to 6ft. in height, broad and well-proportioned, their countenances straight-featured and bearded, with a good-humoured though dignified expression, and splendid foreheads, their shaven skulls encircled by the inevitable head-ring. The third, though taller, is inferior to the others in physique, but he is an *umfane*¹ and does not wear the ring.

Under the warming influence of a big pannikin of black coffee and some 'gwai' (tobacco) wherewith to replenish the polished horn snuffboxes stuck through the lobes of their ears, my guests are in no wise loth to descant upon their martial experiences, or, indeed, upon any subject. The two first belong to the Undi corps, the youngster to the Ngobamakosi; they had all fought at

¹ Boy. Among the Zulus, no matter what his age, every unmarried man is virtually a 'boy.' When he marries he is allowed to *tunga*, lit: 'sew' (the head-ring) and is thenceforth a man. Since the removal of the marriage restrictions, a large number of the young men have thus *tunga*-ed, which they could not have done perhaps for years under the old military system.

Kambúla, and one of the older men at Rorke's Drift. The general opinion in the army, they said, was that Kambúla camp should have been carried, and certainly would have been, but that the regiments forming the outflanking sides, the Ngobamakosi and Kandampemvu, were in such a hurry to begin that they got on too far ahead of the rest, thus affording the English an opportunity of routing and disheartening them before the main body came up.

‘What did they think of the shells?’

“‘Ubaïn-baï?’”¹ “‘Haow!’” Didn't like them at all. First the warriors tried to dodge them, and scattered when they saw them coming, till at last on one occasion when a lot had dispersed from where the missile was expected to fall, it astonished them by dropping right in the thick of the group that had just dodged it. Arms, and legs, and heads flew in every direction,’ went on my informant, with an expressive gesture. ‘This event caused them to lose heart more than anything, as they found they could not get out of the way of the “baïn-baï” so easily. At Sandhlwana the big guns hardly fired at all, and even then, when they did, they scarcely hit anyone.’

‘But at Rorke's Drift—there were no big guns there, and the English could have stood

¹ See p. 148.

here (making my hand into a hollow) while the Zulus were everywhere; how is it you didn't make a better fight of it?'

'The soldiers were behind a *schaans* (breast-work), and,' added the narrator significantly, showing all his ivories, 'they were in a corner.'

'But at Nodwengu there was no *schaans*!'

'Then there were more big guns and more Englishmen,' was the reply; 'besides, the soldiers had bits of roof iron¹ which they held over their heads as shields.' I rather ridiculed this idea (one, by the way, that has gained implicit credence throughout Zululand—some even going so far as to assert that they heard their bullets rain upon the hypothetic bucklers), and pointed out the absurdity of a column taking the field, armed with bits of roof-iron.

'Did they ever pick up any of these things after a battle?'

But all I could say was of no use, the warriors only shook their heads as unconvinced as ever.

Then they began to talk about Cetywayo. 'Where was he?'

'Oh! he was all right,' I replied, 'and well taken care of;' at which they seemed pleased.

¹ The sheets of corrugated iron or zinc, with which most colonial houses are tiled.

‘Were they attached to him? Was he a good king?’ I asked.

‘Ehé! kakúlu’ (yes; greatly)—this with emphasis; ‘he was a good king, and beloved by all the people.’

‘Didn’t he “eat up”¹ and kill a great many people?’

‘No; not many. A few were killed for *umtagati* (witchcraft), but that was all right; if he (the speaker) were guilty of *umtagati* he would deserve to be killed too. Yes; Cetywayo was a good king, and all the people were sorry he had been taken away.’

I stood up and looked on the wide sweep of rolling grassy slopes, over mountain and river, valley and green plain sleeping in a glow of golden sunshine, my visitors eyeing me narrowly. ‘A grand country!’ I said, ‘a grand country! “Sit still”² and keep it; you’ve lost your king, don’t throw away your country too!’

‘Yeh-bo!’ (yes, indeed) they exclaimed, as the idea seemed to strike them; then, rising, they saluted as before, ‘Inkos!’ and gathering up their assegais, started off upon their way. Looking after their erect, well-knit figures, I could not but think

¹ Idiom for seizing anyone’s cattle as fine or penalty.

² ‘Sitting still’ is the idiom for being at peace.

them fine fellows ; not a trace of resentment, no rankling bitterness towards their conquerors ; the war is a thing of the past, and themselves as cordial and open towards the stranger as though it had never been.

CHAPTER XIII.

Kwamagwaza—A desperate position and a tragic reminiscence—The soldiers' grave—The valley of the Umhlatusi.

THE mission station at Kwamagwaza occupies a pleasant position on the high ground overlooking the valley of the Umhlatusi. Tall blue gums stand in considerable profusion, being planted along the ridges and overshadowing the station, and on the steep slopes are large patches of cultivated land sown with mealies and 'amabele.' The huts are scattered about in clusters, with here and there an attempt at a square cottage, constructed of withes cemented with clay, and commonly known as 'wattle and daub;' a window, perhaps, and a rudely hung door finishing off the concern.

Kwamagwaza is a large station, but the people located thereon did not by any means strike me as representative Zulus; indeed, there were Natal natives and some unmistakable half-castes: many of the tenements, too, were tumbledown and squalid in the extreme. The old mission building,

as also the church, were in ruins, having been burnt by the Zulus during the war, which can hardly be wondered at, seeing that it would have been folly on their part to leave buildings which might be used against themselves, as was the case at Etshowe. The station is in charge of the Rev. R. Robertson, a veteran missionary long resident in Zululand. I attended one of the services, part of which was performed by a stalwart native cleric, who also led the singing with five hundred-lung power ; a good many people attended, the men being placed on one side of the room, the women on the other, and seemed to enter into the thing, the singing especially. Near Kwamagwaza are the graves of Lieutenant Scott-Douglas and Corporal Cotter, who met their deaths there under the following circumstances.

On the afternoon of July 1, 1879, Lieutenant Scott-Douglas and an orderly started from Fort Evelyn on despatch duty to Fort Marshall. Whether baffled by the darkness, overtaken by a mist, or compelled to leave the road for the purpose of evading stray parties of the enemy, nobody knows or ever will know ; anyhow, they missed the way, arriving at length at Kwamagwaza. There, it is supposed, they remained, hiding in the ruins of the mission buildings during the whole of the next day, owing to the vicinity of hostile bands. Let us imagine

the position of these unfortunate men. Far from human aid, in the heart of an unknown and savage country; no friendly bush or rocks to conceal their movements from the eagle glance of the enemy's scouts, who from many a commanding eminence would sweep the bare treeless hills and valleys; forced to lie close in the daytime, and at night hardly daring to move lest they should lose themselves yet more. Only two—alone, lost and without food—surrounded by ruthless foes with the glance of the hawk and the movements of the panther, what chance had they? On the morning of the 3rd¹ they evidently tried to retrace their steps, starting back by the way they had come, but not to go far. Cresting the ridge which runs right across the station about half a mile from the ruins, they were fated to fall in with a large body of Zulus from the Empandhleni district who were on their way to join the *impi* at Ulundi. These immediately gave chase. The doomed men fled for about a mile along a spur, then, dismounting, abandoned their horses and plunged into a deep grassy ravine, presumably with the intention of hiding. Fatal move!—flight alone could have

¹ Subsequent inquiries proved beyond doubt that they met their deaths, not on the 2nd, as was at first supposed, but on the 3rd; for the band that killed them did not reach Ulundi in time for the battle, which took place on the 4th. Had it left Kwamagwaza on the 3rd, it could easily have done so.

saved them, for what possible chance had they of baffling by concealment those human bloodhounds trained in all the signs and sounds of the wilderness, able to track them by a displaced blade of grass or the disturbed note of a startled bird. On reaching the bottom of the valley they appear to have separated and taken different directions, for their bodies when discovered were lying some distance apart. I visited the spot where that of Lieutenant Scott-Douglas was found; a deep narrow ravine, one side a smooth round slope, the other covered with mealies and tall grass, while through a line of tangled bush dotted with tree fern, plunging from rock to rock, a mountain stream hurled its clear waters down with a pleasant murmur; and there, beneath the arching feathery fans of two spreading tree ferns, the unfortunate officer met his death. Standing there I could picture the whole scene. The desolate ravine, alive with grim dark figures and flashing spears glancing through the long grass—the hills echoing with exultant shouts as nearer and surer those pitiless savage warriors closed in upon their prey securely trapped in that lonely defile—and the doomed Briton at bay, his back to the hill, the branched canopy overhead and the bounding watercourse at his feet. Then the wild ‘Usútu’ pealing in ferocious triumph—a sudden rush—and all is over. Whether exhausted

and worn out by hunger and the hard despairing race for life, or in the hope that he would be spared, it does not appear that the unfortunate officer made much resistance. But that he died facing his relentless foes there can be no doubt.

It was a clear, still evening ; the shadows were already deepening in the valley, though the surrounding hilltops were gilded by the glow of sunset. I turned to leave the tragic spot, feeling that a kind of solemnity and awe pervaded it, as though faint voices from another world were mingling with the metallic ring of the mountain stream upon its stony bed and the weird piping of a bird in the sedges. Murmur on, winds, in the cool eventide ; fall, streamlet, with tuneful plunge into your rocky cells ; birds trill out your clear notes through this mournful solitude, this vale of death ; sing a requiem over the hapless stranger, done to death, despairing and exhausted, and alone in a far-off land—for these are the incidents that render war a horrible thing, rather than the stirring movements of a brilliant field, the fierce rush of battle and the din and clamour of conflicting hosts, the charge, and the ringing cheer of victory.

The remains of the two ill-fated ones rest beneath handsome tombstones erected by Sir G. H. Scott-Douglas, the lieutenant's father. Upon an eminence overlooking the sad spot stands the little

cemetery—a square enclosure bounded by a sod wall, along whose top is an embryo hedge of aloes and Madagascar thorn. At the head of the tombstones still stand the wooden crosses erected by the troops when they performed the necessarily rough and ready sepulture of their fellow soldiers, and the whole is surrounded by a trench about seven feet by six, outside of which the ground is ploughed up for a width of several yards to guard against any possibility of injury to the place from grass fires. Three large cactus trees, visible from far and near upon the smooth hill top, mark the soldiers' burial ground, which, by a curious turn of fate, is also the old place of sepulture of a Zulu chieftain named Usidwa.

From Kwamagwaza the rolling open country continues; the road winds along over hill and ridge, commanding a view of the Umhlatusi valley, the river now and then glimpsed below like a silver streak, losing itself among the distant spurs, beyond which, in darker blue, the Indian Ocean contrasts with the paleness of the far horizon. On past the mission station of St. Paul's, down a nasty bit of road falling away from Inkwenkwe Hill, and we are in the bush country again. Huge forest trees rise above the mimosa and other bushes fringing the road, among whose gnarled limbs may here and there be descried a big nest of sticks, the

handiwork of one of the many species of large birds of prey infesting these wilds, while creepers and parasites hang in festoons from the branches. Birds are flitting about, waking the depths of the wood with lively call or note of alarm; monkeys spring chattering from bough to bough; and poised high over the tree tops, floats the form of a rakish-looking falcon whirling in steady circles beneath the blue vault, his keen eye upon the noisy feathered denizens of the thicket, while a suspicious rustle in the tangled grass is heard as some big snake, startled by the creaking of wheels, slips off out of harm's way. Behind rises the high ground we have just come down from, intersected by many a gloomy gorge with densely wooded sides and black overhanging cliffs—the home of the savage leopard and prowling hyæna.

The Umhlatusi is a fine stream running in long reaches over a gravelly bed; its banks, well lined with reeds, are suggestive of crocodiles—of which, in fact, the river has its full share in common with all the larger rivers of Zululand; however, upon that occasion we were not troubled by its saurian inhabitants, who, under ordinary circumstances, would fight shy of the noise and whip-cracking attendant on the crossing of a waggon. They generally prefer an easier method of circumventing

their prey, and woe to the hapless native who should chance to be swept off his legs when the river is at flood, or the unwary traveller thinking to enjoy a refreshing swim on that smooth surface. Calves and goats, and even children paddling too near those quiet-looking reed beds, have been seized, and dogs crossing the river sometimes disappear under their masters' very noses.

A grey scud working up across an already gloomy sky, and a few large raindrops, seemed to render a halt advisable before it got quite dark. With the exception of a slight shower or two, the rain kept off; but it was cloudy and lowering, and seated there upon the waggon box until a late hour, smoking my pipe and looking out into the blackness, the subdued crunch of the tired oxen mingling with the heavy breathing of my satellites, who, head tucked up in blanket, were sleeping the sleep of a good conscience, the effect was dismal in the extreme. For now the voices of the wild bush would lend their influences to the scene—the weird call of a night-bird, the yelping bark of a skulking jackal, the howl, or rather roar, of the large striped hyæna,¹ would ever and anon sound from the pitchy darkness around my encampment, while strange and ‘uncanny’ noises echoed from

¹ The ‘wolf’ of the South African colonist.

the ravines and caves of the adjacent hillside. A lonely and desolate place. Notwithstanding all of which exhilarating surroundings I was ready to sleep tolerably soundly by the time it became expedient to turn in, and the following day, cresting the southern heights of the valley, left the bush country behind and eventually reached Etshowe.

CHAPTER XIV.

Etshowe—The fort—Pleasures of picket duty—Two ‘sells’—A retrospective glance—Imbombotyana hill—‘In the Heavens’—A novelty in tattooing—Dabulamanzi—Another ‘beggar’—Derivation of ‘Etshowe.’

ETSHOWE, or, as it was originally written, Ekowe, is an open and commanding position on the brow of the heights overlooking the coast country. The first thing on arrival was to visit the old fort, which I accordingly did, accompanied by the Rev. Mr. Oftebro, the clergyman in charge of the Norwegian mission there, which is one of the oldest stations in the country.

The fort, then, consists of a substantial earth-work, enclosing a space of two acres and a half; it is oblong in shape, and surrounded by a ditch some 12 feet by 10. What with Gatlings and rocket tubes mounted at the corners of the earth-work, and the fosse staked and wired, the place was simply impregnable to a barbarous foe however intrepid, if unprovided with artillery. No fierce rushes such as whelmed the lines at Isandhl-

wana, and caused the fate of the Kambúla camp to hang in the balance, could avail here ; for even in the event of the enemy's legions braving the fearful storm of artillery and volley fire, and surging up to the very walls, there was the gaping ditch, wide and deep, with its threatening stakes and wired network, and its kaponiers, whence a few riflemen could play awful havoc among those who thought to cross it. No ; the Zulus were wise enough to see that the place was too much for them, and refrained from attacking it ; yet to this day they regard it with a kind of satisfaction, as a standing tribute to their prowess.

But although no open attack was attempted, the fort and all that went on there was watched day and night. Zulu scouts would creep up within a few yards of the earthwork, close enough, as one of them told me, to hear the *breathing* of the sentry on guard, and our outlying vedettes were more than once surprised by the lithe and crafty savage, who, worming his way noiselessly through the long grass, left the unpractised Briton but a poor chance, as the following incident, told me by a Zulu who had fought throughout the campaign, may serve to show. This bold warrior, then, in company with seven other congenial spirits, were amusing themselves one day stalking a couple of men on picket duty, who sat quite

unconcernedly while their deadly foes were advancing nearer and nearer upon them. 'While they were talking,' said my informant, 'we crept on; when they were silent we lay still as if dead. We got within fifty yards of them, when others came up from the fort; we did not like the look of these, so were obliged to go away again.' I venture to say that those two will never know what an escape they had. A peculiarly trying and perilous duty is this outlying guard; a couple of men, or even more, placed by themselves, far from the lines and surrounded by tall grass through which the savages can crawl silently and with ease. Little is it then to be wondered at that the attacks upon vedettes were not always unsuccessful.

Imbombotyana, the high cone upon which the heliographing was carried on, overlooks the position, and another mode of aggression adopted by the Zulus was to fire upon the outposts from this eminence. But a party of our men, stealing a march on them in the night, got there first, and, lying in wait, opened an unexpected and effectual fire, mightily astonishing the enterprising barbarian, and completely spoiling his fun. Then the enemy would playfully pull up the stakes which had been driven in at measured distances round the fort to facilitate accuracy of shooting

in case of attack ; a charge of dynamite, however, placed at the foot of one of them exploding with considerable damage, likewise put him out of conceit with this new entertainment.

But a more pressing danger stared the garrison in the face than anything threatened by the enemy. The season was a wet one, exceptionally so in fact, and here were close upon 1,500 men shut up within an area of a couple of acres, without shelter, and obliged to lie on the bare ground, which in the daytime was trodden into sloppy mire, at night reeking with pestilential exhalations. This could have but one result. Men began to sicken and die off, and on a steep slope in front of the fort a little cemetery tells its own tale. Beneath rough and simple, but in many instances tastefully devised, wooden crosses, twenty-eight men, rank and file, lie buried there, most of them, from the inscriptions, quite young men ; and considering the bad and insufficient food, exposure to unusually wet weather, and the inevitable unwholesomeness attendant upon the circumstances, the wonder is that the death return was not much greater.

Looking at the fort now, one would think it had been constructed twelve years ago rather than three. Long grass trailing from the earth-work almost conceals the ditch, whose brink is, in

places, so overgrown with brambles and rank herbage as to constitute a source of danger to the unwary explorer ; the buildings within, that did duty for storehouses and hospitals, are in a tumbledown state ; in fact, the whole enclosed space presents a woful and ruinous appearance. At one end is a clump of blue gums, but the fruit trees planted by the missionaries were cut down with a view to clearing the ground in and around the fortification.

I said that heliographic communication with the border was carried on from the summit of Imbombotyana, and no better point could have been chosen, for it commands the whole of the coast country. From the Etshowe side, Imbombotyana is rather an unimposing round-topped eminence, but from its summit a splendid view awaits, for the ground suddenly falls away a thousand feet, and besides the low coast country, which lies spread out like a map, the eye may wander at will from the Tugela bluff to San Lucia Bay ; from the broken mountains along the Natal border to the Ingandhla range westward. Beneath, a perfect picture is unfolded ; on every side hills and mimosa-clad vales watered by many a silver stream ; herds of cattle dot the slopes, and among the symmetrical circular kraals may be seen moving about the dark figures of their inhabitants,

whose voices and laughter are faintly borne upwards on the still air. In the distance two hump-like hills rising mark the site of the Gingindhlovu battlefield; beyond, the ruins of Fort Chelmsford; and, like a speck, Dikileni, one of the residences of the chief, John Dunn, stands white against the plain, which rolls on till separated by a belt of yellow sand and a streak of shining surf from the deep blue of the ocean. A floating haze, just sufficient to soften the golden rays of a declining sun without impeding the view, settles upon the landscape, and the scene is a charming one.

Before leaving Etshowe I paid a visit to Dabulamanzi, whose principal kraal is about six miles off. This worthy, whose name came greatly into prominence before the war, is one of Cetywayo's half-brothers. Why he should have been made so much of it is difficult to understand, seeing that he is not an *induna* in any sense, and whatever lustre may be reflected on him is solely due to his relationship with royalty, except that everyone, having got hold of the name of one man of rank, was determined to make the most thereof. Accordingly, in Natal, Dabulamanzi was forthwith constituted commander-in-chief of the Zulu army, and its leader in every battle, quite irrespective of such trivialities as time and place.

As a matter of fact he never held an actual command at all, though a sort of precedence was allowed him by virtue of his rank; the real commander-in-chief of the forces being Tyingwayo, in some instances Mnyamane accompanying to 'watch the proceedings' on behalf of the king.

Very picturesque are the kraals in the bush country, and that of Dabulamanzi has the advantage of situation thrown in, lying as it does at the foot of a range of round-topped hills, whose pleasant slopes are relieved at intervals by the dark forest trees of wooded ravines. Imagine two large parallel circles of thorn fence or palisade about seven feet high, the wide inner space being the cattle enclosure, that between them containing the dome-shaped huts. This one numbered fourteen or fifteen tenements, and rejoiced in the aspiring title of 'Ezulwini'—'in the Heavens.' It struck me as a rather amusing coincidence that his other kraal, down in the low-lying coast country, should be called 'Eziko'—'in the fire.' In the open country, where there is little or no bush, the kraals have but one enclosure, which is built of stones, and round this, outside, stand the huts.

We met some Zulus on the way, carrying shields and assegais; one of them was marked about the chest and shoulders as if he had been tattooed with Chinese white, which decoration, he said,

was the result of a rocket burn at Isandhlwana. Two or three men were hanging about as I rode up, one of whom went to inform the chief of my arrival, presently returning to tell me to 'walk in,' which I did, metaphorically, and creeping through the low doorway stood in the presence of the doughty 'Divider of Waters.'¹ My lord looked decidedly cool and comfortable, squatting on a mat, without a rag of clothing but his *mútya*, and the inevitable head-ring encircling his shaven poll. Two of his sons, boys of about ten or eleven, stopped in their play to stare at *umlungu* (the white man) as I entered. One side of the hut was piled up with trunks; and heaps of rugs, topboots, brass candlesticks, lanterns, and other odds and ends were lying about, the whole suggestive of Isandhlwana loot.

Dabulamanzi is a fine-looking man of about thirty-five, stoutly built and large-limbed like most of his royal brethren. He is light in colour even for a Zulu, and has a high, intellectual forehead, clear eyes, and handsome regular features, with jet-black beard and moustache. But although a handsome face, it is not altogether a prepossessing one, for it wears a settled expression of insincerity and cunning which would cause you to have little doubt as to the deservedness of public opinion

¹ Meaning of 'Dabulamanzi.'



BARRETT, PHOTOGRAPHIC

EZULWINI

Dabulamanzi's kraal near Ezulwini

about him if you had heard it, and if you had not, readiness of belief when you should come to do so. That opinion I have heard expressed by those who knew the man, in two words, 'a blackguard.' With missionary and trader alike he is in disrepute, and many are the tales of sharp practice, if not downright rascality, which were told me about him; nor is he popular among his countrymen.

We shook hands, and sitting down opposite the chief, I produced a substantial piece of tobacco, which was promptly transferred to his side of the field. Then he told Andries to bring in my gun—which, in accordance with Zulu etiquette, I had left outside—as he wanted to look at it. He examined it with the air of a connoisseur (the fellow has the reputation of being a good shot), bringing it to his shoulder, trying the hammers, handling the weapon as if he could not bring himself to part with it. I well knew what was coming, and sure enough soon it came.

'I must give him the gun.'

'No, no, that wouldn't do at all. I had the greater part of the country to go through yet, and what should I do without a gun? Besides, what would John Dunn, the great chief, say if I gave away arms in his territory?'¹ (which we were then in).

¹ Zulus are not allowed to possess firearms.

He resigned it with a sigh. 'Hadn't I brought him any clothes?'

'No, they took up too much room.'

'Or some gin?'

'No, liquor was not allowed to be given away either, in John Dunn's district.' In short, the fellow was an arrant 'beggar'; to such an extent that during the rest of the trip his name passed into a standing joke and a byword among Andries and his fellows, who, when any of my visitors waxed importunate, would exclaim with emphasis, 'Haow! U Dabulamanzi!' meaning to say, 'Ah, there's Dabulamanzi!' or 'He must be Dabulamanzi!'

This practice of begging is by no means general among the Zulus, indeed I found it rather the exception than the rule. A good plan when you have to do with anyone of importunate fame is to try and 'outbeg' him; in a word, to meet every demand by a counter request, without the smallest compunction. But, as I said before, the practice is far from being universal, and where it prevails is an abominable nuisance, for you can't converse freely and comfortably with a man whom you well know to be all the time turning over in his own mind what he shall ask you for next.

However, in this instance I had brought my friend a few presents, and began by fishing out a white felt hat with a striped cord round it. This

was accepted with a profusion of thanks, and he proceeded to stick it on his head, thereby metamorphosing himself from rather a fine-looking savage into a slouching ruffian—I never yet saw the Zulu whom a hat of any sort suited. Having sufficiently admired the effect in a looking-glass, he told one of his small boys to put it away, in the execution of which command I discerned, besides a lot of coats and trousers, two more new wide-awakes, and began to wish I had kept my ‘tile’ for the adornment and gratification of some more ‘roofless’ potentate.

A few further gifts met with ready acceptance, and then I thought my turn had come, so intimated that I was capable of appreciating a knob-kerrie.

‘No, he hadn’t got one.’

‘Then what was that?’ pointing to a bundle of sticks in a corner, among which I fancied I could detect a decent one.

‘Oh, that wasn’t a good one.’

‘Good enough,’ said I, on the principle of ‘half a loaf,’ ‘and I wanted something whereby to remember my visit.’

Seeing that I was determined to have it, he sent one of the above mentioned urchins to clean it, and handed it over with great *empressement*. I have it to this day, together with better kerries—and worse.

We talked a good deal about the war and subsequent events, but I elicited nothing new in the way of information or incident from Dabulamanzi, who, like many other Zulus of rank, was reticent in matters political to a degree bordering on the suspicious—and after a couple of hours' *indaba* (talk) I left him.

The word 'Etshowe' was a puzzler to the British understanding when the place first became notable. No one knew exactly how to write it, still less to pronounce it. Some would write it 'Etshowe' or 'Echowa.' Others, again, would make it 'Ekowe,' and when so written the chances were a hundred to one that the British public would thus pronounce it, to wit, with the 'k' hard. The fact being that the word was originally written by the Norwegian missionaries, who spelt it 'Eḱowe,' the accent over the 'k' giving to that letter the sound of 'tsh'; so the spelling which most accurately conveys the pronunciation is 'Etshówe'—the last 'e' being short but sounded, and to this I have adhered.

The derivation of the word is said to be this. Coming up from the enervating heat of the low-lying coast country and suddenly brought face to face at this point with the fresh breezes that sweep the high open regions, a native would exclaim, 'Eh! Tshówe!' (an ejaculation of cold and shivering),

and wrap his blanket around him if he had one, or start off into a run if he had not. Such a meaning, though quaint and apparently far fetched, is nevertheless the probable one, for the first thing that strikes you with regard to the place is its bleak and windy situation.

CHAPTER XV.

Battle of Inyezane—Scenery—An aggressive customer—Inyoni—A trading store—Johan Colenbrander—A tussle, and a narrow escape—Mangéte—Gingindhlovu—A ride across country, and a ducking.

It was a glorious morning as we wound our way down the military road, which, skirting the base of Imbombotyana, zigzags along the ridges, and dipping into a hollow, here and there, at length brings you down into the bed of the Inyezane river. A glorious morning, I say, for the newly risen sun shone from a cloudless sky, and a curtain of mist then lifting had studded the bushes with dewdrops sparkling and flashing like myriads of diamonds. Bright spreuws flitted among the thorns, sounding their shrill but by no means discordant whistle, and the air was musical with the low murmur of bees winging in and out through the blossoming mimosas, whose fragrant boughs, sweeping down over the road, brushed the waggon tent as we passed underneath. But oh, how hot it was!—by the time we had rounded the Ombane spur and crossed the

Inyezane drift, I was nearly baked as I sat on the box.

This was the scene of the engagement with Colonel Pearson's column on the memorable 22nd January, being, in fact, the first pitched battle of the campaign. While halted among the thorns the column was attacked by an *impi*, estimated at about four thousand strong, which after half an hour's severe skirmishing was routed with considerable loss. Though at first sight the circumstance of being attacked in the bush might seem to place the troops at a disadvantage, yet as a matter of fact it was not so; for the Zulus could not show to such imposing effect in point of numbers, nor could they employ their usual out-flanking tactics with anything like such force as in the open. Hence the affair assumed the features of a skirmish, and while the thick bush did not prevent the artillery and rockets from operating with effect, it precluded the possibility of the sweeping and formidable Zulu charge, at the same time affording our men cover whence they could with coolness and accuracy pick off the enemy. This engagement is known to the Zulus as the battle of Ombane (not Inyezane), from the Ombane spur round the base of which it took place.

Beyond the Inyezane drift our way for miles lies over a plain, densely wooded in parts, in others

open and park-like, sparsely inhabited too, for kraals are few and far between, nor are there cattle upon the meadow-like flats. Now and then a buck is to be seen standing on the outskirts of the bush, intently watching us ; birds of prey, too, are plentiful, from the small red falcon hovering over the grass to the huge crested buzzard soaring on dark spreading pinions above the tree tops. The Amatikulu, a clear stream with reedy banks, is crossed, and the dense bush closes up to the road, which becomes a regular jungle path, the trees in many places meeting overhead, their trunks lost in a tangled impenetrable mass of creepers and undergrowth. Strange looking trees, too, such as I had not met with before. One of them bore a fruit with a smooth rind about the size and colour of a shaddock, which Andries assured me was excellent, but on tasting it I found it bitter as gall. His palate and mine were evidently fashioned with differing ideas of 'excellence,' though from the face the rascal made when trying to devour it himself, I imagine it hardly suited him either.

Going along the bush road we disturbed the meditations of a large cobra, who thereupon showed fight. Again Fani was to the fore with his long whip ; buoyed with the recollection of like feats previously achieved he treated the elevated crest and flashing eyes, the inflated hood

and sharp menacing hiss, with lofty disdain, and by a well directed 'whack' put an end for ever to the truculent reptile's hopes and fears. Presently the country became more hilly and open, the domed thatches of huts glimpsed here and there among the bush betokened habitation again, and we passed several Zulu kraals, the sinking sun throwing a coppery gleam on the heads and shoulders of some of their habitants, who had turned out and were peering over their palisades to watch us go by. Halting for the night at the Umsundusi drift we arrived next morning after a short trek at the Inyoni river, a small stream whose mouth is a few miles north of that of the Tugela.

There is a trading store at the Inyoni, but it being Sunday, its occupant was yet between the sheets indulging in a late sleep ; travellers, however, are scarce in those parts, and it was not long before he turned out to do the honours. Curious places are these trading stores. Let the reader imagine a rough and ready building, divided into two or more partitions, round one of which runs a counter duly furnished with weights and scales. On shelves against the walls are arranged blankets, Salampore cloth, coloured handkerchiefs, rolls of tobacco, sheath knives, packages of beads, brass buttons, looking-glasses—everything in which the

native mind delights ; while hanging from nails in the roof beams are buckets, tin pannikins, three-legged pots, cleavers, straps, hats, military surtouts, umbrellas, and so forth. One of the partitions, over and above its use for store purposes, will perhaps be fitted with a rough table and used as dining and sitting room, and if space be an object a mattress will be spread on the bales of goods which do duty as a sleeping bunk. At the Inyoni, however, things were on a larger scale, and the storekeeper had a sleeping apartment to himself.

Being Sunday the store is closed, and we sit in the shade smoking and discussing affairs in general. Presently the trampling of hoofs announces the approach of a party—two white men, and a native on horseback and leading spare horses. The new arrival is introduced to me as ‘Mr. Colenbrander,’ and I find myself shaking hands with a pleasant-looking man of about thirty, every inch the frontiersman, with dark beard and bronzed complexion, and dressed in buckskin suit, with riding boots and spurs ; a revolver in its holster is slung round him, and a formidable clasp knife hangs from his belt. The removal of his hat displays a deep scar over the temple several inches in length, pointing to what must have been a very awkward and dangerous wound ; it is in fact the result of a blow from a battleaxe received during an inter-

tribal foray some months previously. Separated from his party, while pursuing the losing side, he was endeavouring to ride down a fugitive, who turned upon him and a severe hand to hand conflict ensued. The savage, expecting no quarter nor deigning to ask it, fought with all the reckless courage which characterises his race, and laid about him lustily with his axe, then driving an assegai into his adversary's head he strove with all his might to work it down into the brain; Colenbrander, however, seized his wrist, and for some moments thus they struggled. But the Zulu warrior, though a powerful man, was no match for the cool pluck and determination of the European, and, severely wounded in more places than one, Colenbrander succeeded at last in killing his antagonist, stabbing him to the heart with his own assegai. This encounter added not a little to the reputation for pluck and resolution which he already enjoyed.

Johan Colenbrander is of Batavian origin; during the war he served as a volunteer in the Corps of Guides with the coast column under General Crealock, and took part in the battle of Gingindhlovu. He is now established as a trader in Sibepu's country and is much trusted by that chief, to whose place, some 150 miles further north, he was journeying at the time of our meeting.

He is adviser and confidential agent to Sibepu, and a man of some importance in Zululand.

We rode over to Mangéte, John Dunn's principal residence, the following day. It lies in a hollow about two miles from the Tugela, and looks quite a village; besides the chief's own dwelling, a large comfortable-looking house with a verandah, there are other tenements great and small, including the 'office,' gaol, &c., and the quarters of his secretary, an Englishman. There is also a school, where a number of the chief's daughters are being educated under a European governess. Within a couple of miles is St. Andrew's Mission, one of Bishop McKenzie's stations; whereby it will appear that John Dunn is not averse to tolerating missionaries as such, though sternly (and rightly) excluding the *political* missionary from his territory.

On reaching Mangéte I learnt that the chief was not expected back for some time, being away at his other place in the Umgoye mountains, which was disappointing, as I wanted to make his acquaintance. Therefore when Colenbrander proposed that I should take a ride up there with him, as he was going that way, it seemed the very solution of the difficulty; accordingly, starting the waggon off on the backward track with orders to await my arrival at Etshowe, I strapped a mackintosh on to the saddle and was ready for a start.

A couple of hours' easy riding—for it was hot—brought us to the Amatikulu, some twenty miles below where I had previously crossed, and after watering our horses in the clear stream we held on. Passing Fort Crealock—formerly a strong earthwork but now deserted and in ruins, being, like all the other 'forts' built in the country, constructed for purposes of temporary entrenchment only—on, through fields of standing corn and pumpkin patches, past a couple of shanties, where we halted a few minutes while my companion exchanged civilities and 'chaff' with some very rough specimens of Dutch humanity, and presently we turned off the waggon track to visit the battlefield of Gingindhlovu. As we rode slowly up the long slope down which the horsemen charged the fleeing Zulus, a white object glistening among the grass attracted my attention. It was a single skull, and a fine large head it must have belonged to; no bones were to be seen around, nor while exploring the field did we find any other relics of the engagement—nothing but this one solitary skull.

Gingindhlovu struck me as one of the most God-forsaken places I had ever seen. Standing within the low crumbling earthwork I looked around. To the north the ground stretched away for miles, flat and open, dotted here and there with clumps of bush, to where a range of hills shut in the

view ; on the left front the Ombane spur, above and beyond which rises Imbombotyana. From this direction the attack was first made, the right horn of the *impi* meanwhile, sweeping up on the other side of the *laager*, succeeded, by reason of the lay of the ground, in getting within two hundred yards of the entrenchment before being discovered. This side was led by our friend Dabulamanzi on horseback, who, however, found it expedient to withdraw, the riflemen making things altogether too warm for him. The attacking force has been estimated at about eleven thousand, and was under the command of Sigwelegwele, the *induna* of the Ngobamakosi regiment—Dabulamanzi being also there on his own account. On the west side of the earthwork lie buried the officers and men who fell in the engagement, the grave of Colonel Northey having a wooden cross over it painted white.

The sky had become overcast, and as we turned to leave the place great inky clouds were gathering up over the mountains to northward, and the long low boom of distant thunder was ever and anon borne across the still waste. When we had ridden a little way I looked back—there stood the wooden cross by the side of the crumbling earthwork, gleaming white upon the bare dismal plain. A lonely grave in a strange and lonely spot.

We passed the ruins of the old Gingindhlovu¹ kraal, and soon arrived at Dikileni, John Dunn's halfway house, where we would offsaddle for an hour, then on again. Travelling rapidly over wide flat plains, we leave Fort Chelmsford away on our left, and the Umgoye range rises nearer and nearer in front; but the weather is threatening, and though only a few drops of rain have come near us, heavy showers are falling in the mountains ahead. The ground gets more uneven, and presently the rain comes down in earnest. Crossing the Umlalasi we are fairly among the mountains, winding in and out by narrow paths well known to my companion and saving a considerable distance. High round-topped hills, through whose grassy valleys rivulets are bounding, their courses marked by lines of tree ferns and yellow-wood, the bridle path carries us higher and higher, till at length we crest the last ridge and arrive amidst deluging torrents of rain at our destination.

¹ From 'Ginga,' 'roll,' in the sense of 'roll over,' and 'indhlovu,' 'the elephant.'

CHAPTER XVI.

Ncandúku—John Dunn—Administration of justice—Liquor traffic—Sitimela—‘A stitch in time’—An eventful career—Charioteering *in excelsis*—Gibhana.

A WILD and picturesque valley in the Umgoye range, shut in by forest-clad hilltops and cleft by a clear stream leaping from rock to rock in many an eddying pool—on a spur overlooking this stands Ncandúku,¹ the mountain residence of the chief, John Dunn. A single-storeyed house, with verandah on two sides, dining and sitting rooms, and plenty of bedrooms—a more comfortable dwelling than the generality of frontier houses, even within the colonial border. At the back are the stables (for the chief is particular in matters of horseflesh), offices, and other outbuildings, while in front a fruit garden slopes down to the stream. A large circular kraal lies in a hollow just below the house, and strips of cultivated land are laid out along the river bed; the place is well shaded, if

¹ Nca-indúku, ‘hit a stick,’ in the sense of parrying a blow.

anything rather too closed in with trees. Such is Ncandúku.

And now a word as to its owner, about whom I have from time to time been asked all manner of absurd questions, even by those whom one might have expected to know better. 'Didn't he wear the head-ring, or live in a hut, or dress in a blanket?' and so on. John Dunn is a handsome, well-built man, about five feet eight in height, with good forehead, regular features, and keen grey eyes; a closely cut iron-grey beard hides the lower half of his bronzed, weather-tanned countenance, and a look of determination and shrewdness is discernible in every lineament. So far from affecting native costume, the chief was, if anything, more neatly dressed than the average colonist, in plain tweed suit and wideawake hat. In manner he is quiet and unassuming, and no trace of self-glorification or 'bounce' is there about him. He has a reputation for reticence—a fault in the right direction by the way, for his part is a trying and difficult one, and the more uncommunicative he is the better—doubtless owing his success in great measure to the fact that he knows how and when to hold his tongue.

We met with a kind welcome, and towards dark sat down to a well served and plentiful spread, being waited on by a tall head-ringed man, who

moved noiselessly about with an aptness that any civilised butler or club waiter might have envied. We turned in somewhat early, for the chief, besides being a man of temperate habits, is a practical believer in the 'early to bed, early to rise' maxim, and the next morning Colenbrander and I parted company, he continuing his journey northward, and I remaining a day or two longer at Ncandúku. I declined his invitation to join him in a sea-cow shooting expedition in the winter, though if ever I did launch out into that particular branch of venerie, I should not wish for a better companion.

The territory under the sway of John Dunn lies between the Tugela and Umhlatusi rivers, and is about 100 miles in length, extending along the border to within fifteen miles of Isandhlwana, where it joins Hlubi's district. So far as I could judge, it appeared to be as orderly and well governed as that of any other potentate, and a great deal more so than those of some. Three European 'administrators' or magistrates—one of these, by the way, being the son of Mr. Oftebro, the missionary at Etshowe—are stationed in different parts of the country, whose business is to collect hut tax and adjudicate upon petty cases, the more serious ones being decided by the chief himself, to whom of course lies the right of appeal in any. Offences capitally punishable, such as murder, are

tried before a full court, constituted of all the 'administrators' and native *indunas*, and presided over by the chief, who is very attentive to all matters connected with the administration of justice; he has an organised staff of native police under a white inspector, and is frequently occupied the whole day in hearing cases. The 'administrators' receive a fixed yearly salary from the chief.

A sore point with John Dunn was the possible restoration of Cetywayo, which he looked upon as a direct breach of faith with himself. It must be remembered that Sir Garnet Wolseley's words on the subject were explicit when addressing the chiefs and people at Ulundi on September 1, 1879. Said he, 'It is six years ago on this very day, September 1, that Cetywayo was crowned king of the Zulus, and only yesterday you yourselves saw him carried away a prisoner, never to return again to Zululand.' *Never to return again to Zululand*—and on that understanding, said John Dunn, he and the other chiefs undertook the responsibilities of the territories allotted to them. That was the basis of the Ulundi settlement, the perpetual exile of Cetywayo from Zululand; and as long as the chiefs appointed under that settlement observed the provisions of their deed of appointment, it would be a monstrous breach of faith on the part of the Imperial Government to oust them.

A great many ungenerous things have been said and written about John Dunn, mainly attributable, I cannot but think, to jealousy of a man who has made a position for himself and is reputed wealthy. - One of the commonest charges against him is that of supplying the Zulus with firearms previous to the war. Even if he did, was he alone in this? Further, would those who make the most outcry about it have refrained from doing likewise, given the chance? I doubt it greatly. And then one seems to remember hearing it pretty frequently laid down as an axiom, that the natives are more formidable when armed with their own weapon, the assegai, than with firearms. If this be so, how in the name of logic can anyone make a grievance of their possessing firearms which they are unable to use with precision, are likely to cumber their movements in the field, and, better still, cause them to deteriorate in and abandon the use of their own weapon?

Another reproach hurled at the chief is that he has become 'a regular Zulu' and is a polygamist. If he prefers living in Zululand and occupying a high position among its people to living in Natal, a unit among his fellow-countrymen, it is purely his own affair: I can imagine a man who has led a wild, roving life finding the position of chief, among a brave and superior race like the Zulus,

one not unworthy of his ambition. His domestic relations, again, are entirely his own concern ; he lives in Zululand, not in European society ; he does not bring his wives with him when he visits the colony, nor on these occasions can anyone cite a single instance of his acting in a way unbecoming the usages of civilised society.

Persons wishing to trade in the territory are required to take out a licence, paying for the same at a fixed rate per waggon, but all trafficking in firearms or ardent spirits is strictly prohibited under any circumstances.

I emphatically assert that on the ground of his proscription of the liquor traffic alone, John Dunn is entitled to the thanks of all true philanthropists, and whatever may be his shortcomings in other respects, this would go far towards whitewashing them. Look at Kafirland and the locations along the Cape frontier, studded with canteens enjoying an almost unrestricted right of sale—and what is the state of the natives ? A thieving, filthy, impudent, worthless set of vagabonds, a pest to their unfortunate neighbourhoods, never reliable and always discontented, spending all their earnings in drink when they do condescend to work. I have seen as many as a hundred Kafirs round one of these canteens in a state of semi- and complete intoxication ; and there they sit and drink, working

themselves into a sort of frenzy, till a word brings about a blow, and a savage fight ensues. Cape colonists complain that the Kafir becomes more worthless and impudent every day, and wonder thereat; yet not only the country but every border town swarms with canteens, their walls red with Kafir ochre.

Now let us turn to Zululand—and what a contrast! Here are no canteens, and instead of the slouching, drunken barbarian of the Cape border, you find the well-made, intellectual-looking Zulu, with his open greeting and cheery smile—a savage also, but a fine savage, cleanly in his person and dwelling, and honest withal, with whom, except in actual time of war, the traveller and his belongings may move about in safety, as I have already shown. And the time will come, as ‘British influence’ extends, when the country will be ‘opened up,’ the trading store and canteen run hand in hand, and the demoralisation of this splendid race will begin. Then we shall hear people talking of how the Zulus have ‘deteriorated.’ Therefore, in prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquor in his territory, John Dunn is acting as a wise and far-seeing ruler, and really doing more for the welfare of his people than by building a legion of schools and churches.

He has been accused of tyranny and wholesale

‘eating-up,’ but it should be borne in mind that savages must be ruled with a strong hand, half measures being worse than none at all : further, that the leaders of the King’s party, his relations and others, were sullenly and but passively acquiescent in the settlement of the country, as indeed they still are ; and if the chief was obliged to resort to occasional acts of severity in order to maintain his authority, there was every excuse for him. Added to this must be considered the exaggeration inseparable from nineteen out of twenty cases of the kind, and in about the same proportion to them. That of Sitimela is one in point.

About eighteen months ago, one Sitimela, by birth a Tonga, but hailing from Natal, set up a claim to the chieftainship of the Utetwa tribe, and further, to the throne of Zululand itself. Having collected a force, this ambitious gentleman made a descent upon the territory of Umlandela, a next door neighbour of John Dunn’s, who forthwith fled to him for assistance. The intervention of Mr. Osborn, the British resident, was called in, but that official’s powers being purely nominal he could do nothing, and the matter was given over to the chiefs, Dunn and Sibepu. Accordingly a force of about 1,500 of Sibepu’s men, under Colenbrander, and 2,000 of Dunn’s, led by the chief in person, met Sitimela and his followers, attacked and routed

them with great loss, and burnt their military kraal. Sitimela himself was either slain or managed to get clean away, for he has not been heard of since, and peace was restored. The affair was seized upon with avidity by certain parties in Natal, stories of atrocities were trumped up, and capital made out of it by those interested in the King's return and others hostile to Dunn, who was accused of sanctioning the massacre of women and children, and encouraging his followers to commit acts of barbarity, and a small hullabaloo was raised. Of course some excesses are inevitable in war between savages, who in the flush of conquest are simply unrestrainable, but there is no proof that the chief was aware of any such until too late to prevent them, even if he was at all. On the other hand, I have been assured on good authority that his orders were the reverse of merciless. But a rising which might have assumed the proportions of a serious disturbance was effectually nipped in the bud by the promptitude and energy of John Dunn.

The chief has been severely handled by colonial writers and speakers on account of his attitude during the war—in fact denounced openly as a traitor to his former friends. Now this is not only unfair but ungrateful. Knowing every inch of the country, thoroughly conversant as one of

themselves with the people and their ways, Dunn with his corps of Guides was able to be of the most valuable service to our forces. Looked upon with suspicion by the colonists as soon as he arrived in Natal, and denounced as a Zulu spy; his life in danger as men's minds were more and more worked up by the ever developing uncertainty and excitement attendant upon the war, what wonder that, yielding to Lord Chelmsford's earnest solicitations, he at length abandoned his attitude of neutrality and took the field with us? It was a mistake, perhaps; indeed I cannot help thinking that had he held out to the end as strictly neutral, his position to-day would have been vastly stronger with the Zulus themselves, and from a colonial point unassailable. But, as he remarked rather bitterly to me, his detractors never seemed to consider what a difference it might have made to our arms if he had thrown in his lot with Cetywayo and brought European experience, combined with more than Zulu shrewdness, to bear upon the enemy's councils of war. That the Zulu force was badly handled, not so much in open fight as in neglecting to seize its multifold opportunities of harassing our movements, is obviously patent; what a difference, then, in the results of the campaign might have been the presence of a cool, resolute, far-seeing European at its head.

John Dunn's history is briefly this. English by birth, he arrived in Natal with his parents when quite a boy, and early evinced a predilection for a roving life. In 1856 civil war broke out in Zululand between Cetywayo, then heir to the throne, and his brother Umbulazi, and Dunn, at that time twenty-two years of age, was sent by the border agent to assist the latter chieftain. The rival forces met about four miles from the Tugela, close to Mangéte, and a sanguinary battle took place, resulting in the slaughter of Umbulazi, with a number of his followers, and the total defeat of his army, Dunn narrowly escaping by swimming the Tugela and taking refuge in Natal.

In the course of hostilities, Cetywayo's party had seized some cattle belonging to white traders under the pretext that these had helped Umbulazi, and this bid fair to lead to complications. Again Dunn came to the fore, volunteering to proceed to Cetywayo's residence and induce him to give up the cattle. A risky experiment, deliberately to place himself in the power of a savage ruler against whom he had so recently fought. But he knew his man; Cetywayo's ardour had had time to cool, he saw that he had 'put his foot in it,' and was casting about for a means of getting out of the difficulty with a good grace. Dunn's arrival supplied that means; the cattle were restored, and

Cetywayo, remembering the bravery displayed by Dunn in battle, also admiring the cool daring of the man who was not afraid to beard him in his own country after having fought against him as an enemy, made overtures of alliance. Dunn was induced to transfer his fortunes to Zululand, where he soon made his mark as a hunter and trader ; he was created an *induna* over a section, and lived as such under Cetywayo until the commencement of hostilities in 1879.

The weather was too rainy during my stay for much going about. On one occasion the chief took me for a drive in his American ‘spider,’ and the masterly way in which he steered that light but thoroughly serviceable vehicle round the spurs and along the steep grassy sides of the hills where there wasn’t a vestige of a track, rather astonished me. ‘What would an English coachman do if told to drive here?’ said he. Certainly the feat looked a formidable one, and yet we went swinging along as if there had never been such a thing as a level road. A younger brother of Cetywayo’s, Gihlana by name, put in an appearance at Ncandúku, but there was nothing remarkable about him ; he has a quiet, pleasing countenance, and, like the King, is very dark coloured.

A strange and eventful life had been that of my host, and, what with hunting stories and talking

over Zulu and other affairs, I found I had got through three entertaining days by the time I took the road again ; when, bidding farewell to the hospitable chief, I started across country under the pilotage of a guide he had provided for me, to rejoin the waggon at Etshowe.

CHAPTER XVII.

Wild country—Sigwelegewele—A crack colonel of a crack regiment
—Etshowe again—A dissertation on phenomena—Inkwenkwe hill
—Vumandaba—A chief 'at Home'—'Hard wood'—A 'lively'
domicile—Novel weapons—'Bring us back the King!'

LEAVING Ncandúku behind, we struck into a narrow
bridle path which wound in and out around the tops
of the hills, the forest-clad Umgoye range on the
right, while to the left a rolling and sparsely wooded
tract of country stretched far away past the Gin-
gindhlovu field to the Tugela. The day was cloudy
and cool, and my pony stepped out briskly; my
guide, a tall, thin old Zulu, trotting cheerily along
in front. Here and there we came to a multitude
of diverging tracks, whereupon the old fellow
would suddenly go down on all fours, minutely
examine the ground for a moment, and springing
up, point to one of the paths with his kerrie, ex-
claiming 'Lo!' (that), suiting the action to the
word by striding along it at a great pace. I was
fortunate to have him, for there were so many
tracks shooting off in all sorts of directions, that I

should have been sadly at sea if alone. Nor would a knowledge of bearings help much, for the way is so winding and circuitous, by reason of hills and broken ground, that frequently you seem to be heading right away from your destination instead of towards it, and what is apparently the shortest and most direct way leads you after a little while—nowhere.

Thoroughly savage and forbidding in aspect was the region through which lay my route that morning, and yet essentially picturesque. On every side deep ravines, a line of black vegetation marking the course of a stream dashing through their depths, while perched on a hilltop here and there, might be seen a large kraal, its palisade of thornbush, circular and symmetrical, forming a dark crown upon the round green summit; and as we threaded the bridle path on the side of a well-nigh perpendicular slope, literally poised over the ravine hundreds of feet below, in our ears the deafening rustle of the grassy sea swaying and tossing in the breeze, the effect was certainly wild.

Eight or ten miles of travelling brought us to a couple of well-to-do-looking kraals, one being that of Gihlana, before mentioned, the other that of Sigcwelegcwele, the *induna* of the Ngobamakosi regiment, which is the crack corps of the army.

I was anxious to visit this magnate, but had a long way to go that day and the weather was very unsettled; however, while debating in my mind whether to go into the kraal or not, I saw a tall Zulu advancing towards us from the drift of the stream. From the deferential manner in which my guide addressed him, I suspected that this must be none other than the owner of the euphonious name himself, and so it turned out. He is a fine-looking man, in the prime of life, tall and broad-shouldered, and carried his shaven head as erect as if it ought to wear a crown instead of a shiny ring of mimosa gum—a good specimen of a savage warrior; and I thought that if the Ngobamakosi could show many men like its chief, small wonder at it being the crack corps. We exchanged the ‘time of day,’ but not much more in the way of *indaba*, and I held on my course. The Umlalasi at that point boasts a remarkably bad drift, wherein, my horse slipping, I came a nasty cropper, fortunately with no more result than a semi-ducking and a bruised elbow. The old guide was active in his commiseration, wrenching up huge handfuls of grass wherewith he sought to dry my soaked ‘continuations,’ much in the way that one would rub down a horse when grooming him. He looked upon me as a special consignment from the chief, and as such to be carefully handled until I

should be delivered over at Etshowe in safety. As we progressed I began to suspect that my pilot was by no means so sure of the road as he professed to be, and some curious turnings and awkward crossings which he ran me into, further strengthened the idea. However, we got over the worst and most hilly part of the way without further accident, and made a halt near the kraal of Sintwangu, the king's messenger, whom I had seen at the Inyoni. I sent the old fellow across to try and get some mealies or *tywala*, but he came back saying that Sintwangu was away, and the people at the kraal had told him that food was scarce in the land and they had none to spare; so there was nothing for it but to saddle up again and push on. Notwithstanding this philosophical reflection I began to feel very hungry and rather tired, which combination of discomfort, taken in conjunction with my casualty in the drift, had thrown me—shall I confess it?—into an exceedingly bad humour, culminating in the certainty that my guide was steering at random, in fact didn't know much about the way—a conviction I more than once endeavoured to force upon him, but the old fellow was very good-natured over it all—only laughed and shook his head, pointing to the track more emphatically than ever. I thought there was no end to the tortuosity of the bush paths—for we had got into wooded country again

—now slipping and tumbling in the rocky bed of a watercourse, now ducking my head to avoid having my eyes scratched out by the long sharp thorns of a sweeping mimosa bough, and was not at all sorry when, late in the afternoon, after a final climb, we found ourselves at Etshowe, and there, about a mile off on the flat, stood the white tent of the waggon.

My guide was well looked after, and started off home again next morning in a most contented frame of mind, brought about by the acquisition of sundry articles of luxury and use precious in native eyes.

And now I had come through the lower part of the country from end to end. Entering at Rorke's Drift, and taking the battlefields and places of interest in their order, I had thoroughly 'done' Isandhlwana and the Fugitives' Drift, Sirayo's stronghold, and the scene of the Prince Imperial's death in the Ityotyoti valley. I had inspected the fort at Etshowe, and the Inyezane battlefield, had made my way down to the residence of John Dunn near the Tugela mouth, and then round by the Gingindhlovu, Fort Crealock, and the Umgoye back to Etshowe. I had seen the different phases of country, wooded and open, and had had experience of all weathers. I had visited and been visited by several of the chiefs and principal personages,

and had talked with all classes of the people. So now I began the return march. As far as Kwamagwaza the way was the same ; from there I would branch off, and passing Ulundi make my way to the wild mountainous regions in the north.

Starting at daybreak from Etshowe, I intended to cross the Umhlatusi bush and get over the worst part of the opposite ascent before night, but the weather in front looked anything but promising. From the brow of the ridge heavy showers could be seen travelling along the opposite heights, completely hiding them every now and then in a thick misty veil. Curious effects are frequent in these parts. I have watched a shower moving in a compact solid-looking pillar, and standing within a hundred yards of it as it swept by, felt no more of its effects than a slight drizzle, as one might feel the spray of a waterfall. I have stood for a couple of hours watching a violent thunderstorm sweep over a large tract, and within a mile of its inky curtain and vivid flashes, the clear azure of the sky immediately overhead was not obscured by a single fragment of a cloud. A beautiful effect was that produced by the change of position of a rainbow, one end of the bow remaining stationary, while the other described almost a semicircle on the plain, moving swiftly round like the beam of a revolving light in a fog. And the night side is

rich in phenomena ; meteors of wondrous beauty are not infrequent, while shooting stars are so common that one hardly notices them.

Although the weather was dull and ominous, by afternoon the clouds had all cleared off, the sun poured his rays into the valley, keeping up its reputation for intense heat, which, by the way, is the usual characteristic of these deep bushy valleys. At nightfall I halted beneath the Inkwenkwe hill, whose round back loomed against the clear starry heavens. A flame from the dying camp fire every now and then cast a flickering glow upon the white tent, sinking again into its dull red embers ; the drowsy talk of the ' boys ' lying rolled in their blankets under the waggon ceased ; and the distant cry of bird or beast, borne up from the valley beneath, was the only sound which broke the stillness.

Between the Inkwenkwe and Kwamagwaza lives one of Cetywayo's military chiefs, by name Vumandaba, whom I had marked down for a visit ; so under the guidance of a small boy who had wandered to the waggon to see what he could pick up, Andries and I started upon that mission. A winding bridle path, steep and slippery, brought us to the chief's residence, which lies in a deep valley—so deep and narrow as rigidly to exclude anything in the shape of a current of air. A

stifling hole; although but a short distance from the road, one might pass it again and again without even suspecting the existence of habitation, so uninviting and unlikely a place is it. The kraal is not an imposing one by any means, and when we arrived everything human seemed to be carefully keeping out of the baking heat. A few draggle-tailed cocks and hens were pecking about, and I was rather astonished to see slinking among the huts a common domestic cat, though a demoralised and attenuated-looking specimen of the 'familiar' of the kitchen hearth.

Dismounting in front of the principal tenement amid vociferous yapping from the usual contingent of curs, I was told that Vumandaba would be glad to see me, so, crawling through the aperture, stood up in the hut. Coming suddenly into the gloomy interior from the full glare of a midday sun, at first I could see no one, but soon made out several dark forms squatting in a semicircle, upright and motionless, eyeing me in suspicious and inquiring silence. The chief was sitting a little apart from the others, and having narrowly scrutinised me for a few moments, he broke the silence with the usual greeting, 'Saku bona!' to which I responded by shaking hands, and sat down opposite him. The Zulu has a mode of shaking hands peculiar to

himself ; it is not like the English way, but a good honest grip for all that. His fingers and thumb are kept quite rigid, but he lays hold of your hand and shakes it with a will ; very different to the dab of a flabby paw with which the Boer favours you, leaving a sensation on your palm, of contact with a fish or a raw leg of mutton. Vumandaba is a tall, thin old man, with grizzled hair and beard, a rugged countenance, and at first a not very prepossessing appearance ; he is a good specimen of the high class Zulu, dignified in manner and speech, and free from Dabulamanzi's besetting sin—begging. He was in great favour with Cetywayo, who created him principal *induna* over the Kandampemvu regiment, and also appointed him 'cupbearer,' his duties being to attend upon the King and to taste the food and drink before it was allowed to pass the royal palate.

I said that Vumandaba's appearance was not a prepossessing one ; yet, when the first instincts of native reserve had worn off, I found him a very genial and pleasant old fellow. Not the least pleasing feature about him were his feelings of attachment and loyalty towards his late master. He was full of Cetywayo, nearly his first question being about the King and his welfare. 'Why hadn't we brought him back? All the people wanted

him. When Lukuni¹ (Sir Evelyn Wood) came to Inhlazatye several moons ago they thought he was bringing back Cetywayo, but instead he told them that the King would not be restored. They were disappointed; they all wanted the King again. Why had Lukuni come all the way from England to tell them that? *I must get the King brought back to them; they wanted to see him. When I returned home I must be sure and tell the Government to send back Cetywayo.*'

I hastened to explain that my mission in Zululand was quite unofficial, and that, being only a private person, I had no more influence for or against the desired restoration than the most insignificant inhabitant of their kraal. But it was no use; they only half believed me, for they couldn't understand anyone taking the trouble to visit them and their country purely for the fun of the thing. 'Hadn't I *anything* to do with Lukuni or with Government?' 'Nothing whatever,' I reiterated. I told the old chief, however, that I could do this much for him—record his wishes for the benefit of the public. Whereat he seemed pleased.

There was one exceedingly unpleasant side to

¹ 'Lukuni' means literally 'hard wood,' and the sobriquet by which the gallant General is known throughout Zululand is not only a play upon his name, but a tribute to his reputation as a soldier in native estimation.

my visit. Happening to glance upwards I noticed that the whole roof of the hut was alive with a kind of trembling shimmer, reminding one of the electric advertisements over shop doors. On closer investigation I discovered that the roof was alive with cockroaches, whose shiny backs were responsible for the glistening I had seen. They literally swarmed, and though with some alacrity I left a space between myself and the side of the hut against which I had been leaning, yet every now and then one of the cheerful insects would playfully promenade along my ear, or two or three would organise a steeplechase on the brim of my wide-awake. This was nasty, to say the least of it, but when they took to dropping into the pots of *tywala* which had been brought in for our delectation, it was nastier. The old chief didn't seem to care though; with the greatest *sangfroid* he would insert his grass spoon, ladle out the offending insect, and proceed to take a big drink on the spot, just to show there was no ill feeling; while I—well, the day was piping hot, and one can't afford to be fastidious in the wilds—found it in my conscience to follow his example. All the native huts, by the way, are more or less overrun with cockroaches, though in some of comparatively recent construction there are hardly any; Vumandaba's abode, however, judging by the smoke-blackened rafters and

the superabundance of these crawling pests, must have been a venerable tenement indeed.

The Kandampemvu regiment was in the thick of the battle at Isandhlwana, and foremost in carrying the camp, though it suffered severely in the earlier stage of the conflict from the fire of the outlying companies; and now its chief told me how stubbornly some of our soldiers had fought to the last, many of them using their pocket-knives when their bayonets were wrenched from them. Some even astonished their savage enemies by a well-directed 'one, two' straight from the shoulder, flooring the too exultant warriors like nine-pins. The Zulus could not understand how men could use their hands as knob kerries, for the native is quite a stranger to the art of fisticuffs. 'A few of the soldiers,' said the chief, 'shot a great deal with "little guns" (revolvers), but they didn't shoot well. For every man they killed, they fired a great many shots without hitting anybody.'

One thing that sent Vumandaba up in my estimation was that he did not begin by asking for anything and everything. But although he did not beg, he was greatly delighted with the gift of a large knife and a few other things I had brought, gripping my hand with fervent expressions of thanks, which were duly echoed by the other men in the hut; for if you give anything to a chief,

his followers always shout out their thanks as vigorously as though the donation were to each and all of themselves. He made me a present of a likely-looking knob-kerrie 'to remember him by,' which I have still—a most effective companion for a dark road in a ruffianly neighbourhood. On hearing I would pass Inhlazatye, he was very anxious that I should see Mnyamane and the King's son Dinizulu, and as I was getting up to go, the old chief laid his hand on my arm in his eagerness. 'Bring us back Cetywayo,' he said; 'we want to see our King again. Bring him back!' I declare I felt quite small for the moment, call it foolish sentimentality who will. Many a time since have I seemed to see the old man's rugged, earnest face, and to hear his emphatic tones—the loyal old warrior—pleading for his fallen and exiled King.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Cetywayo and the missionaries—Entonjaneni—Valley of the White Umfolosi—A cool spot and a picture—Mahlabatini—‘Then and now’—Battle of Ulundi.

HITHERTO I had been particularly fortunate, having got along without breakdown or accident of any sort, either to waggon or oxen, servants or self, and now was back at Kwamagwaza. There I met Dr. Oftebro, a Norwegian medical missionary, who had been some time settled in the country and was then living in the Mahlabatini basin, a few miles from Ulundi. This gentleman—a relation, by the way, of the missionary at Etshowe—was of opinion that the war could not have been averted. The Zulus, he said, especially the younger men, were so inflated with martial ardour, so completely carried away by a sense of their own vast superiority over any force that could be brought against them, that there was absolutely no holding them; and they bragged openly and incessantly of what they could and would do when the word was given for them to march upon Natal. In fact,

a white man's life was not safe in Zululand at the time. The doctor had no very high opinion of Cetywayo, whom he described as crafty and unreliable, infinitely inferior in character and probity to his father Mpande,¹ whose word could always be depended upon.

By the way, I found that Cetywayo did not stand well with the missionaries generally, which one can readily understand ; for, apart from a certain professional prejudice against a man who deliberately and absolutely rejected their teachings, all the traditions, interests, and predilections of a savage ruler, or, indeed, of a civilised one, would naturally be in antagonism to the setting up of an *imperium in imperio* among his subjects. That the establishment of mission stations was regarded distrustfully by Cetywayo on this account there can be no doubt ; and if 'good' and well-meaning people would but think, they would see that a heathen king was not necessarily a monster because he opposed the 'spread of the Gospel,' and would, perhaps, write and talk a little less wild nonsense on the subject. Even if the would-be evangelisers are earnest, single-minded men, desirous only of making converts from heathenism—as I am willing to believe the missionaries in Zululand are—the fact still remains that the whole of their

¹ Commonly known as Pánda.

teaching is contrary to the most rooted convictions and time-honoured customs of the nation, upon whom, after all, they are virtually forced *nolens volens*. I say forced, because it is idle to suppose that, prior to the war more than now, any Zulu potentate would have *dared* actually to abolish missions, however desirous he might be of doing so. It is one thing for the missionary to take his life in his hand and go among savages, simply relying on his message and example for success; it is another thing for him to go into Zululand with the full *moral* support of the British Government at his back. I have no hostility towards missionaries as such—quite the contrary. But I do think we should look at the question from both sides; remembering, too, that in his heathen state the Zulu would not compare badly for morality and honesty with the average Briton, man for man, and that Christianity is not always exhibited to him in a specially immaculate or attractive guise. And it is a fact that no missionary's life was ever taken or even threatened in Zululand previous to the war or since, though they may now and then have undergone petty annoyances from this or that individual chief.

A midday halt some twelve miles from Kwamagwaza, a night trek, a long bumping down the steep Entonjaneni hill, and we are among the

‘thorns’ in the valley of the White Umfolosi. Stifling hot is it here, even so early as 7 A.M., and as we move along towards the river not a sign of humanity do we see. No picturesque kraals dotting the hill sides; we meet no Zulus striding along the road flinging their cheery greeting at us as they pass; all is deserted even as though the land were ‘dead,’ as the expressive native idiom for war-time has it. Here and there a huge bird of prey springs away from the topmost branches of a euphorbia, and, spreading his broad wings, soars lazily off to flop down upon a bough some two hundred yards further and inspect the intruders; or a buck starts up suddenly amid the long grass, and before I can get a shot at him, bounds off through the thick bush which covers the valley on either hand. Passing the old *laager* where the column was lying four days before the battle, while messages were exchanged between the King and Lord Chelmsford, we come to the drift, which, though wide, is shallow and good. We cross, and outspan on the bank under the shade of the mimosas. It is a lovely spot. In front the broad Umfolosi flows on over its sands, between green banks fringed with overhanging trees and dense reed patches, then, making a sudden bend below the drift, it washes the base of a long wall of red *krantz* whose creviced face is festooned with mosses and trailing

ferns. The air is warm but not sultry, and vibrates ever and anon with the strident screech of a tree cricket, while the call and whistle of many a bird sounds from the brake. Presently some Zulus descend to the river on the other side, and begin to cross; the effect of their dark bodies against the water, their coloured shields and gleaming assegais, and the wild surrounding, with the background of bush and blue sky, makes a perfect picture. Then as the sun gets low, we inspan and trek on quietly, to halt upon the scene of the great decisive battle which was to break the Zulu power.

From the Umfolosi drift, open and undulating ground with patches of bush here and there. We cross a small watercourse or two, and about an hour's travelling brings us to a grassy level, commanding a view of the entire plain, from the river behind to the ranges of hills which close it in like a basin. Here on the right, about one hundred yards from the road, is the site of the Nodwengu kraal; about a mile on the other side of it is a huge circle in the grass, several hundred yards in diameter. A curious circle, apparently a belt of herbage of different growth, for it is darker than the green slope on which it lies. That circle is all that remains of the Ulundi kraal—the former residence of the Zulu King. About a mile beyond this again, and at nearly even distances from each other, may



SITE OF ULUNDI.

be seen two more large circles, marking the site of the military kraals, Qikazi and Umlambongwenya, the first being on the left and nearest the road. The remaining two, Undakaombi and Bulawayo, situate on the left of the road and not visible from it, go to make up the six kraals constituting the capital of Zululand. Whether by accident or design they are placed in threes, forming two triangles.

Travelling through the country I think one hardly realises to the full the thoroughness of its conquest. Kraals and mealie fields all over the place; cattle grazing quietly and securely; Zulus passing to and fro, always cheerful and apparently contented, and to hear them talk, moreover, does not convey the idea of a conquered people. But standing as I did that sunny afternoon contemplating the large silent circles on the Mahlabatini plain, formerly astir with busy life—then it is that the sense of change forces itself upon one.

Let us suppose an evening such as this. There stand the huge kraals with their clustering rings of dome-shaped huts, among which, here and there, dark forms may be seen moving, while yonder a number of women are coming from the stream, calabash on head, in single file, stepping to the time of a monotonous but not unmelodious chant. The sun dips to the western hills; sleek cattle are

wending along the green plain, conspicuous among them the snowy whiteness of the royal herd ; the barking of dogs and the shout and whistle of drivers mingling with the deep-toned low of driven cattle. For a short time all is bustle and animation ; then the red fires twinkle out here and there in the fast gathering darkness ; a hush falls ; but those silent and fantastic dwellings are teeming with human life—the pulsating heart of a warrior nation.

But to-day how different is all this. Yon silent circles remain, sole relics of the savage capital burnt and razed to the ground. Our shot and shell has well and effectually done its work. Skulls and bones bleaching by hundreds in the grassy bottoms, instead of the fierce and dauntless savages who formerly peopled this place and marched in serried battalions up to the very mouth of the cannon, to be mown down like grass, but to fall as valiant warriors, shouting their battle cry—as true patriots defending their homes. No one can say that these were foemen unworthy of our steel, and now that resentment has had time to cool, no one will grudge them due praise for a long and stubborn defence of their country. But the blood of thousands of their bravest has been poured out like water, their King a captive and an exile—their former capital a scene of silence and

desolation. Truly one feels that the greatness of a nation lies buried here.

The following is so graphic an account of the battle of Ulundi that I cannot refrain from quoting it in full. It appeared in the 'Port Elizabeth Telegraph,' August 12, 1879.

BATTLE OF ULUNDI.

(By an Eye-witness.)

'Some weeks have elapsed since I wrote to you last, and during the interval some stirring events have come to pass. I must make a skip and come down to July 2. On that day the two brigades of the second division, having on the day previous descended from the heights to the west of Ulundi, began the march which brought them, in the afternoon, to the banks of the White Umvolosi. In the early morning, long before the sun was up, Col. Buller, that man of muscle and nerve, had started with his irregular but serviceable cavalry to take up a position on the west bank of the river, and hold it until joined by the troops. At six o'clock the column followed, the 90th leading. I left at the time, and an hour's ride brought me to the cavalry. The mounted infantry, under Capt. Brown, were away on a distant ridge to the left, the Basutos, under Captain Cochrane, were ahead, Raaff's Rangers were on the right, and D'Arcy's

F.L.H., with Baker's Horse, were in the centre. Everything was quiet when I arrived, although a few minutes before the men had distinctly heard the war song of a Zulu regiment in motion. Hearing from Capt. Blaine that this regiment could be seen from the position held in front by the Basutos, I went forward and joined these gallant auxiliaries. I found them all seated upon a small kopje, and, together with their officers, looking intently at the kraal of Nodwengu, distant from there about four miles. They had been watching the regiment whose chanting had been heard by the volunteers behind. This regiment or regiments numbered about 8,000, and came from a military kraal about five miles to the north-west of Nodwengu, and on the left of the Basutos. The Zulus marched in companies, chanting their terrible war song as they went, and very soon reached Nodwengu, into which they filed in splendid order. From the kopje I had a good view of Undine, which I take to mean a collection of the King's kraals. Below us, 800 yards off, flowed the winding Umvolosi, its western bank covered with a thick growth of mimosa trees and aloes; just before us, and a mile on the other side of the river, was Bulawayo, one of the military kraals; to the right of that, and 700 yards distant, was the mighty circle of Nodwengu, with its ring of huts, five

deep; to the east of the latter was another large military kraal; another one again on the right of this, and between these two last, but nearer down, was Ulundi, with the southern curve of the circle alone showing on the top of a rise. It was not long before I saw the regiment leave Nodwengu and march for a kraal above it. In half-an-hour I saw four regiments on the march from various points to a kraal above Ulundi. In this they formed up, and a formidable mass they appeared to be; almost filling up all the available space in the huge circle. Ulundi, you must remember, is 500 yards in diameter, and the other kraals are almost as large. At 12 o'clock the formation broke up, and the warriors poured out in three broad and long black columns. They had been doctored, and were ready to accept battle. However, no engagement was to be fought that day. General Chelmsford would not cross the river, although the ground on the other bank offered by far the best site for a camp; and the two laagers were formed up among the thorn trees at a distance of some 700 yards from the river drift.'

After describing at considerable length the events of July 3, the narrator goes on:

'Next morning, ere yet the sun had risen, the troops silently assembled. Buller's Irregulars crossed the river and took up a position at the Bula-

wayo kraal. At 6 o'clock the infantry advanced, Wood's division leading. The Lancers brought up the rear. The morning was biting, and a damp mist hung over the river, but the troops walked through the broad river as if they were tramping along over a macadamised road. The march was continued to the Bulawayo kraal, where the troops were formed up in square, while the cavalry advanced again as far as Nodwengu. General Wood then rode forward and selected a spot to the north-east of Nodwengu, and about 600 yards from the nearest curve of the huts. This site was on a ridge, and commanded a front on every side of 500 yards. While the troops were advancing to take up a position here, the irregular cavalry again moved onward. At this time the mist was lifting, and the enemy could be seen on our right and left advancing in loose and open order. I went up to Baker's Horse, who were ordered to draw on the enemy from the north. Very soon I saw the loose masses on the north form up in companies, which soon covered a frontage of a mile, with the right wing resting on a ridge above the drift, and the left wing in the valley on the north side. As Baker's Horse advanced another body of the enemy emerged from the hills still further north, formed into line, and effected a junction with the other line. There was then a

horse-shoe formation on the north, with the right on one ridge and the left on another, and covering a distance of some three miles. This long black line swept steadily forward upon us, and, as I saw them come on, I thought the battle that day would be a long and a terrible one. Baker's Horse advanced towards the left wing of this formation, and as they neared the regiment on the left the latter broke up, and the Zulus scattered in skirmishing order. Lieut. Parmenter then advanced with about twenty men, and poured a volley into the enemy at a distance of about 200 yards. The cavalry then slowly retired. They had done what was required. This had drawn on the enemy in fine style, and as we galloped back to the square the bullets were whizzing about us. Just before Lieut. Parmenter made his daring advance I looked around. Not a shot had been fired. The mist was slowly lifting from the hills, but still hung above the river. The sun was flaming blood red above the eastern hills. All was quiet; an awful stillness brooded over the valley, broken only by the melodious singing of birds, a strange prelude to thunder of cannon and rattle of musketry. Nature seemed waiting for the terrible drama to be so soon played out on that silent plain. Silent and motionless for that breathless instant were those who were to play at that drama. Below us

was the solid square of British soldiers, a small red square, the centre of a vast black line formed by 15,000 savage warriors, who were here bearded in their stronghold. Between the centre and the black line were bodies of cavalry scattered, each troop standing in line with front to the enemy. It seems to us that the black line has but to tighten and then, with a rush and a bound as it springs into action, overwhelm that small body of British soldiers. But there are terrors concealed in that solid square that will shake the fiercest hearts and boldest spirits among the Zulu thousands. See that cloud of white smoke that suddenly sweeps from a corner of the square! Hark to that thunderous report; hear the rushing of the shell overhead! The battle has commenced; the circle is drawing in; the cavalry are retreating; the first gun has been fired; the shell breaks above the heads of a regiment of hot young men advancing at a run from the north, and as it breaks those beneath scatter and rush back. If Cetywayo, watching the battle from afar, sees that he must quake. When men waver in the first rush there is little hope for them. But still the circle narrows, and now the cavalry are all within the four walls of living men. Then the roar of battle begins indeed. There is one continuous rattle of musketry all round the square, the thunder of guns,

the growling of the Gatlings, and the constant whizzing of the bullets overhead. The 94th and 21st form the rear ; the 58th and 13th face Nodwengu on the right ; the 80th are in front, and the 90th on the left. There are two guns at every corner, and two guns in the centre of each side. Young regiments are attacking the rear and left ; married men on the right and front. The enemy makes the fiercest assault on the rear. On come the young men in the face of the leaden hail poured upon them by the 94th and 21st. These regiments are as cool as if on parade, and they fire in sections, obeying the orders of their officers as to sighting and firing. They keep up a continual firing, but yet the young warriors advance until they are within one hundred yards. Now there is a cry for the Gatlings, and the order is passed down the line of the 90th to the 80th. Now the enemy are within one hundred yards of the glistening bayonets ; and now they waver and look back. It is all over with them. A thundering cheer from volunteers and soldiers rises above the roar of guns. The enemy turns and flies. Now is the time for the Lancers. They leap into their saddles, and the 21st open a way for them, but the General thinks it is too early for a charge. Besides, the married regiments are making it warm for the 13th and 58th. A few more volleys are fired, and

then the Lancers are permitted to go. They file out and form up outside the 94th; their tall lances and fluttering pennons look like a forest. Now they are off, and are thundering after the disheartened warriors. They sweep round from the right of the 94th, and come out at the left of the 21st, and their track is marked by some 150 dead and dying Zulus. And now the irregular cavalry dash out. Baker's Horse rushes up to the point it reached in the morning, and chases the very regiment it had drawn on. The Basutos gallop away towards Ulundi, chasing one of Cetywayo's picked regiments beyond the King's kraal and killing some 50 warriors. And so with the other troops. The battle has lasted but 40 minutes. We lost 16 killed and had about 40 wounded. Truly the Zulus are bad shots, for a better target than we presented they could not have wished for. The enemy lost about 1,500, and 500 of these we must put to the account of the cavalry, who, both English and colonial, behaved splendidly. Half-an-hour after Ulundi was in flames. It was a huge kraal, with huts six deep, and in numbers sufficient to shelter 10,000 men. I went into Cetywayo's house (a three-roomed single-floored place, with thatched roof, verandah, doors, and windows), but there was nothing in it but some old rat traps and three pieces of ivory, which fell to the lot

respectively of Commandant Baker, Lord Beresford (who was first in the kraal), and Capt. Cochrane, who fired the house. In an hour the six military kraals on the plain were in flames and belching forth dense volumes of smoke. That night the Zulus sang a different song from that which they had so menacingly wailed forth on the preceding night. The battle was decided by the artillery before the enemy came within range of the small arms. The shrapnel took the dash out of the attacking columns. The enemy's strategy was excellent, but its execution was bad. Cetywayo, as I have said, watched the battle from afar in company with Mnyamane and other chiefs. Dabulamansi was present at the fight.'

CHAPTER XIX.

A Zulu on Gatlings—Ulundi and Nodwengu—An unlucky warrior—
Tall haggling—Midnight at Ulundi—A Golgotha.

My camp was pitched within thirty yards of the site of the famous hollow square and about four hundred from that of Nodwengu, and the morning after arrival I started to explore the ruins of Ulundi, under the guidance of an old Zulu who had formerly been one of the head men of the Undakaombi kraal. At the bottom of the slope I dismounted to examine one or two of the skulls lying about among the grass, some being remarkably large and well developed ones. I drew my guide's attention to this, as he stood curiously watching me. The old man smiled rather mournfully and shook his head. 'Yes,' he said, 'we lost some fine men—numbers of them. What could we do against you English? You stand still, and only by turning something round¹ make the bodies of our warriors fly to pieces; legs here, arms there, heads, everything. Whouw!—What can we do

¹ The Gatling.

against that?' We resumed our way, and having crossed the stream which threads in sedgy reaches along the grassy bottom, stood upon the ruins of Ulundi.

Some idea as to the dimensions of the kraal may be gleaned when I say that it takes full five minutes of tolerably quick walking to cross it. The floors of the huts still remain, with their fire-places in the centre, but are thickly overgrown with coarse herbage. At the upper end, near the principal gateway, was Cetywayo's residence, a square tenement with glazed windows and a door; the other huts for his wives and attendants being of the ordinary shape. I was keenly on the look-out for relics, but could find none; a few bits of broken glass, remnants of ancient gin bottles, lay about, and fragments of native pottery, which is made of clay baked in the sun and very brittle and crumbly. On the site of the King's huts I picked up some pieces of a clay bowl, a fragment of an iron three-legged pot, and a smooth round stone such as would be used for polishing floors—a duty it had probably often performed on that of the royal dwelling. Other relics more curious or valuable there were none.

We pass on to Nodwengu. Here everything wears a similar aspect, and the floors of the huts clustering thickly together are covered with the

same rank overgrowth. Nodwengu is the next in size and importance to Ulundi, and like it, a royal residence, having been the abode of the last King, Mpande, Cetywayo's father. It is now the headquarters of the Nodwengu and Kandampemvu regiments—Ulundi, as its name implies, being that of the Undi, the royal corps.

By the time we have fully explored the two homes of former royalty, the increasing force of a blazing midday sun renders it expedient to return to the shade of the waggon, where, as I lay in the heat of the afternoon, taking it easy in company with a long pipe, a passer by or two would sit down for a few minutes' chat, but people were not so numerous in these parts as I should have expected. One young Zulu, a light-hearted, talkative fellow, sat there descanting by the hour on things in general. He had been shot in the leg at Isandhlwana soon after the fight commenced, and had lain on the ground until two of his brothers carried him out of harm's way, so was not able to see the end. I put in a suggestion to the effect that it was better to be shot through the leg at the beginning of the fight than through the head at the end of it, which aspect of the case seemed vastly to tickle his imagination, for he went into a fit of laughter and agreed emphatically with the idea. I happening to mention that I was rather

on the look-out for curiosities, my friend produced a beautiful little horn snuffbox, and wanted to know if that was the kind of thing. I replied that it was, whereupon he handed it over with a laugh, saying I must take it to show the people in England. He then asked if he should get me any more like it, and on receiving an answer in the affirmative he limped off down the road, returning in about half-an-hour with a lot of snuffboxes, bangles, spoons, and beadwork trifles, for which he said I must give him things in exchange, as they were not his own, and he couldn't make me a present of them as he did the first snuffbox. I took over the lot, to our mutual satisfaction. Poor fellow, he will carry a tangible reminder of that bullet until his dying day.

While on the subject, I was surprised at the fewness of wounded men I fell in with during my progress through the country. Whether, owing to rude surgery, numbers died whom the most ordinary skill could easily have saved, I cannot say, but considering that every man with whom I conversed had taken part in one or more of the battles, the fewness of those who had wounds to show *was* rather remarkable.

Presently some girls put in an appearance, with the object of bartering a mat to me in exchange for some beads. I looked at the mat—it was a

good specimen of native work, and would do well to hang a Zulu trophy against, when my travels had been relegated to events of the past—and decided to have it. But the way in which the artless young creatures haggled was amazing. I hadn't the exact kind of beads they wanted, so must give them about five times as many of another kind; and that wasn't enough either; I must throw in half-a-dozen other things besides, because I was an 'inkos,' and they didn't see a white 'inkos' every day, and so on. I let them have their full fling, and then stated my terms. More haggling, all talking at once, chattering and laughing at the top of their voices; but I got my mat, and at my own price.

Our bargain concluded, they seemed sorry there was nothing else to wrangle over, if only for an excuse to make a little more noise. Two of them were daughters of the old man who had officiated as guide in the morning; another argument adduced in favour of an extra donation, by the way. Many of the Zulu girls are good looking; tall and graceful, with an exceedingly bright and pleasing expression; and these two were no bad specimens of their race, as they stood there, their lithe brown figures adorned with various coloured beads fantastically worked. They made such a row, however, chattering and screaming with laughter,

that I was not sorry to see the last of them, as they went bounding away in the direction of the paternal kraal.

A glorious night succeeds the heat of the day ; one advantage of the South African climate is that however hot the day, the night is nearly sure to be at any rate bearably cool. This one is perfect ; the air still and balmy without a suspicion of chilliness, and not until after midnight can I make up my mind to turn in, so take a late stroll round the scene of the conflict. A grand moon in its third quarter hangs overhead ; shadowy and indistinct sleep the heights, bathed in a misty film, the sharp outline of many a peak toned down by the softening light ; a faint murmur of plashing water is just audible, where Umfolosi flows and ripples over her sandy bed ; and ever and anon, from far away along the bushy river bank, the howl of some prowling beast is borne upon the night. I wander on ; at every step skulls, gleaming white amid the grass, grin to the moon with upturned face and eyeless sockets. Yonder, shadowed forth in dark contrast on the moonlit plain, lie the ruins of Ulundi and Nodwengu, dim and mysterious, like mystic tracings from the wand of some grim wizard of the wilderness. A night bird skims across the waste, its plaintive cry floating above the weird circles like a strange lament over the

downfall of those who erewhile peopled these solitudes, and a slight breeze shudders through the long grass like the whisperings of unearthly voices.

I return to camp, the white tent of the waggon glistens like silver in the moonbeams, and a few dull red embers in the dying fire glow amid the ashes. Every living thing, biped and quadruped, is buried in slumber, an example I haste to follow.

CHAPTER XX.

Mfanawendhlela—A native dish—A jovial crew—Inhlazatye and the Residency—Moral suasion—‘No thoroughfare’—Intaba’nkulu—Messengers—‘Thunder in the air,’ metaphorical and literal—On storms—A refuge—A pleasant position, and a night march under difficulties.

It is early morning as we move away from our halting place and take the road for Inhlazatye, which runs right past the kraal of Mfanawendhlela, the chief of the Ulundi district, who tumbles out, swathed in a green blanket, to prefer a modest request for a bottle of gin. He is, however, doomed to disappointment.

We climb the ridge, and the road winds along the heights above the Mahlabatini plain ; there lie the circles of the ruined kraals, the silver thread of the river is now and again visible, and beyond, the stone wall of the old laager ; while rising from the wide valley, the Entonjaneni range cleaves the skyline. Turning from this to the north-eastward a view of the dark forests beyond the Black Umfolosi opens out. A few hours’ travelling, and we reach a group of large kraals standing surrounded

by their mealie patches, and bearing every indication of well-to-do-ness. So unusual a sight as a tent waggon and its team, and a Briton riding in front of the same, was enough to cause quite a commotion in the minds of the inhabitants, and in less than no time half a dozen big Zulus came running up, anxious to know who I was and all about me ; as usual, taking me for a trader. They pointed out a good place to outspan, and I told them to come down presently and have a talk ; a proposal they were ready enough to endorse, for, as I said before, the Zulu is an inveterate gossip, and given a good listener, will indulge his propensity for *indaba* to any extent. Over and above which, an idea is floating through his mind that there are pickings to be got at the white man's waggon, and that on leaving the said structure he is extremely likely to have acquired sundry trifles of more or less value to himself.

These were exceedingly civil fellows. We had not outspanned many minutes before a lot of *amasi*¹ was brought to us, sent by the head of the kraal, who with two or three more came to see what was going on. Others 'dropped in,' and presently there were ten or a dozen stalwart bar-

¹ Curdled milk, which forms the staple article of Zulu diet. It is eaten with mealies or 'amabele,' worked into a kind of paste. No adult Zulu will touch fresh milk, which is looked upon as food only fit for children.

barians squatting round, talking and laughing at a great rate. I think there can hardly exist a more thoroughly good-humoured race than these people; they never seem out of spirits, always cheerful and lively, ready at a jest too. And can't they laugh? Anything in the shape of a joke will elicit roars of merriment, spontaneous, hearty, and unfeigned. I have seen a group of Zulus roll on the ground and laugh till the tears ran down their cheeks, at the antics and repartee of a native Joe Miller. My visitors on the present occasion formed no exception to the rule. They talked and sang, and went through various manœuvres for my entertainment, showing me how they made the charges which proved so fatal to our troops. They would rush forward about fifty yards, and imitating the sound of a volley, drop flat amid the grass; then when the firing was supposed to have slackened, up they sprung, and assegai and shield in hand charged like lightning upon the imaginary foe, shouting 'Usútu.' It certainly gave one a very fair idea of their mode of procedure in actual warfare.

I wanted to reach Inhlazatye that day—its forest-clad sides were visible, rising up far in front—so as soon as the heat began to abate, prepared for a start. When we had inspanned, the head man made a speech, consisting, as usual under the cir-

cumstances, of expressions of good will, after which the Zulus stood up, and with hand uplifted sang out, 'Inkos! Hambane gahlé!' ¹ their deep voices making quite an imposing chorus. We parted the best of friends, and saddling up I mounted and took the road, leaving the waggon to follow.

A long, deep, desolate valley stretching ahead for miles—a spectacle to rejoice the eyes of a lover of the wild open scenery of Dartmoor and the like. The hill sides treeless and brown, nothing to relieve the wild monotony of the bare grassy slopes; a clear stream dashing over rocks and boulders; the jagged outlines of the mountain ridges, prominent above which rise the terraced slopes of the turret-headed Zihlalu; and the utter sense of solitude, would, I repeat, form a paradise to the moorland Rambler. But to me there always seems something dismal about this kind of thing. The stillness, the absence of animal life, all has a sombre and depressing influence, as of a place one would be glad to get out of. Every now and then the track would descend abruptly into a watercourse overhung with precipitous rocks and aloes, just the place for an ambuscade. A steady climb up a long steep bit of road, and I am riding over wide elevated tablelands; behind, the towering head of Zihlalu, which from this point bears a striking resemblance to the

¹ 'Chief! go in peace!'

lion-shaped Isandhlwana, diminishes against the evening sky, the wooded sides of Inhlazatye draw nearer and nearer, and presently a light twinkles from a group of huts at the base of the mountain. It is the Residency.

Here a disappointment awaited, for the British Resident, Mr. Osborn, whom I was anxious to see, had left for Maritzburg only that morning ; but I met with a very kind welcome from his clerk, Mr. Boast, who was in charge during the absence of his chief. The Residency, which is structurally of a significantly temporary nature, consisting in fact of a few large Zulu huts, occupies a pleasant site on the eastern slope of Inhlazatye, commanding a wide sweep of hill and valley in front, while immediately behind, the great mountain rears its forest-clad sides and precipitous walls. Mr. Osborn and his clerk were the only Europeans on the place, a few native policemen and an interpreter or two constituting the staff, under which circumstances it may readily be imagined that the sole influence exercisable by Her Majesty's British Resident in Zululand must be of the order known as moral suasion. It may likewise be supposed that, situated in the midst of a number of turbulent and discontented chiefs and rival factions in a chronic state of almost open warfare, among whom the peace must be kept somehow, two Europeans,

backed by a few native constables, are in a somewhat precarious and difficult position. Such was the state of Zululand and the position of its Resident at the time of my progress through the country.

From the summit of Inhlazaty, a wide plateau some 6,000 feet above the sea level, there is a grand view, the whole country lying mapped out beneath. It is one of the highest points in Zululand, and with Ibabanango constitutes quite a landmark for the greater part of the western side—either of which when visible would suffice to indicate his bearings to anyone not wholly deficient in bump of locality. Capital company was my host, and as we sat of an evening—shall I confess it?—till late, over our pipes, he would entertain me by the hour with anecdotes of Diamond Fields and border interest. An isolated monotonous sort of life must this Residency position be, but my friend Mr. Boast seemed to take to it kindly. There were horses to ride and plenty of bucks to be shot in the mountains, whose grassy slopes also abounded in partridges and quail; it cost not much in the way of living, and life could be taken in free and easy fashion.

Very cheerless was the prospect as, after a stay of three days at Inhlazaty, I turned out of one of the huts at early dawn and climbed shiveringly

into the saddle, having started the waggon the previous day. The air was chilly, heavy masses of grey mist were driving along the face of the cliff, a general feeling of dampness and a lowering sky seemed to portend rain, and amid so auspicious an opening to another day, I turned my back on the Residency and struck into the road which skirts the northern side of the mountain. On the one hand a mighty cliff, whose dark wall frowned overhead, on the other extensive fields of mealies and *amabele*, with kraals in the distance; but being in about as exalted a state of spirits as the gloomy surroundings and the weather would be likely to produce, I hardly looked to the right or to the left as my pony stepped along at a brisk easy walk, till, going down into a drift to cross a dry watercourse, my cogitations were suddenly interrupted by a deep threatening sound, and above the long grass on the opposite bank appeared a formidable-looking head, surmounted by a pair of sharp gleaming horns with a most suggestive upward curve, the whole being the property of a very fine and very savage-looking Zulu bull, who stood there about ten yards in front, rolling the whites of his eyes, and pawing the ground with all the power and more than half the will to oppose my progress; for that the deep growling sound which he emitted was the bovine equivalent for

‘no thoroughfare,’ neither I nor my steed entertained the slightest doubt. Now I was not at all in the humour to make a long *détour* just for the sake of affording a little fun to my opponent, and yet there the brute stood, lashing his chocolate-coloured hide, ploughing up the earth with his hoofs, and throwing his horns about in a manner that meant volumes. What was to be done?—my most formidable weapon of offence or defence being two thirds of a light riding switch. However, ‘needs must, &c. ;’ so turning a little out of the track I passed about a dozen yards from my tyrant without altering pace—in fact pretending to ignore his existence. I don’t mean to say I felt happy in my mind—the ground was open, not a semblance of a bush round which to dodge him had he carried out his amiable intentions to the full—all that could be done was to take things quietly. I looked round ; the brute was following at a walk, but getting over the brow of a rise I clapped spurs and—went ; so when my pursuer’s objectionable proportions appeared against the sky line, I had put such a distance between us as to have the laugh entirely on my own side.

After a ride of several hours I found the waggon outspanned on a high ridge opposite Intaba’nkulu, a long flat-topped mountain some twenty miles from Inhlazaty. Some of the people

from neighbouring kraals paid me a visit, and sat talking as usual about the war and Cetywayo; several had snuffboxes stuck in their ears, consisting of revolver cartridge cases with stoppers, which they said they had picked up at Isandhlwana. In the middle of the day three Zulus carrying bundles of assegais went by in rather a hurried manner; however, thinking to trade for an assegai or two, I called out to them to stop. They came up, but would hardly sit down. 'What was the news?' I asked, seeing that something was in the wind. They replied that Ndabuku had gone to Maritzburg after the Resident, because Sibepu was sending a force against him to 'eat him up.' Then gathering up their assegais they started off at a rapid pace, saying they could not wait any longer.

The above intelligence, if true, most likely pointed to a row, Ndabuku and Mnyamane being the prime agitators and leaders of the King's party, as against Sibepu, John Dunn, and Uhamu; and the fact of Ndabuku having gone into Natal would show that something was brewing. I had noticed a good deal of unrest among the people in different parts of the country, and now I was in one of the most disturbed centres.

But meanwhile the weather, which had brightened up since the morning, again became gloomy

and threatening; a dark cloud working up from the south-west, and a distant flash and faint roll of thunder, warned me what to expect. Gradually a black pall spread from the horizon till nearly overhead; from my elevated position I overlooked the country for miles, and near and far huge dark columns were moving along as heavy showers swept over the plain. Louder and nearer came each successive roll, and bright jets rent the inky cloud into many a ragged edge. There is something very awe-inspiring about the approach of a storm in these regions. The wildness of the surroundings; the boding stillness that falls upon all nature; the towering ruggedness of the mountains; the vastness of the bare spreading plains, over which the huge curtain, black as night, comes sweeping up, like the slow and sure advance of some fell host from whose pursuit there is no escape; and the ground trembles beneath the long, deep, threatening roll, and a scorching smell fills the air as each blue steely jet strikes down into the very earth. A crash which seems to split the mountain tops asunder has scarcely time to die away in reverberating roar among the crags, when another, yet more startling in its appalling suddenness, follows upon it, while the fluid plays around in vivid streams; and stunned and deafened by the terrific din and well-nigh blinded by the dazzling

glare, you feel as though enveloped in a sheet of electric flame.

We hastened to inspan, thinking to avoid the storm, or at any rate to get into a better place, but had not gone far before it became necessary to halt. There were some kraals lying on the plain, nor was it long before one of their inhabitants came to see who I was, and pointed out the way to Hlobane, saying I could get there next day. He said that Uhamu¹ had been 'eating up' and killing numbers of people all round Hlobane, and that the Abaqulusi section, to which he (my informant) belonged, had been driven out altogether, but he had heard that some of them had gone back. He didn't seem to consider himself safe even there, for although now in Tyingwayo's territory, yet Tyingwayo was a friend of Mnyamane, who was for the King, and an *impi* might arrive from Uhamu at any moment. However, I induced him to go a little way with me, the track being somewhat indistinct, and the storm having cleared away we started. After about an hour's travelling I parted with my guide, and struck into the valley which skirts the northern side of Intaba'nkulu.

¹ A half-brother of Cetywayo's, commonly, but erroneously, known as Oham, who came over to the British side shortly after the commencement of hostilities. He was appointed under the Ulundi settlement to a district in Northern Zululand, but has the reputation of being rather a tyrant.

For a little while after sundown the sky kept clear enough, and one could see the way, albeit the same was very bad and swampy, but this was not to last, for now heavy clouds began to work up, speedily obscuring the moon. The track went from bad to worse; at times one would have to stop and go on hands and knees, literally to 'nose' out where it lay, and no sooner fairly on the move again than the wheel would sink to the axle in a mudhole. Outspanning was not to be thought of; we were in the middle of a regular swamp, and must get through somehow; but get through we must, as to that there could be no mistake whatever. It became darker and darker, above on either side loomed the mountains, the harsh croaking of innumerable reptiles sounded from the slimy morass, while every now and then a ghostly blue light would flicker and disappear, to gleam out again a few yards further. Splash, splash—on we went, the ground wet and glistening as we ploughed through it; not a yard of the way did any one of us know, and it was a case of forging ahead and trusting to Providence. Cheerful position! A dreary swamp towards midnight in a gloomy defile in the heart of a wild country; the track scarce discernible, and a thunderstorm rolling up behind, for by that time there was every promise of a repetition of the midday entertainment. A

heavy shower or two would reduce the ground to an impassable state, it might be for days. The idea acted like a spur; we pushed on with redoubled energy. Now one wheel would plunge into a hole, or both would stick fast in a narrow but deep runnel, to be extracted therefrom with much holloaing and cracking of whip; then we would get off the track, and only find it again with some difficulty and considerable delay. But, at last the ground became firmer, the clouds parted a little, and the moon shone out—the worst was over, and after crossing a shallow river which ran plashing and bubbling in the moonlight, we camped for the rest of the night; none too soon either, for the rain came down smartly, and the storm which had been following us now burst. But thoroughly tired out, I dropped off to sleep in the middle of it.

The next morning was cool, not to say chilly, and though masses of cloud were hanging about and drifting slowly apart, there seemed no probability of more rain. I found that we were in one of those basin-like valleys which form a special feature in that part of the country, and as the team laboured slowly up the steep road I was able to take in the scene of our nocturnal march; then as we ascended higher and higher Intaba'nkulu was left behind.

We move along beneath the bush-clad heights—one wooded peak standing out above the rest against the sky—poised over many a circular kraal with which the deep narrow valley below is studded. Rivulets leap from rock to rock, burying themselves in the mossy recesses of their funnel-like beds, to emerge with a dash and sparkle, and plunge on laughing over their slippery stones; feathery tree ferns wave their fanlike boughs above the path; and at last we gain the ridge. A fresh view opens out, and we look down upon the bare treeless plains lying beneath the rugged precipitous range comprising Zunguin and Hlobane of ill-starred fame.

CHAPTER XXI.

An exhilarating scene—Hlobane—‘Excelsior’—Umbelini’s fastness—
A rout and a race for life—A talk on the mountain side—A tragic spot.

A WILD waste, flat and treeless ; grey clouds thickly veil the sky, and the shades of evening are fast gathering. In front, like a wall, rises the side of a long hill ; no kraals or grazing herds upon its dark slope lend life to its desolation ; no break occurs in the hard, regular line of perpendicular rock wherewith its summit is crowned—a stern and forbidding height. This is Hlobane mountain.

We cross a reedy swamp lying in a hollow of the plain, whose slimy pools resound with the croaking of frogs and the splash of reptiles as they plunge into the muddy depths, and wind along a level flat. The marsh just left is the source of the Black Umfolosi. Skirting the base of the Hlobane we pass a high conical hill called Nyambi, which rises on our left front, and by the time we are camped opposite the ridge connecting Hlobane with Entendeke, night has long since set in. The posi-

tion is a lonely one, and seems none the less so that every yard we have traversed in order to reach it has been *terra incognita*. Southward, among heavy piles of clouds, lightning gleams are ever and anon playing, the shadowy outline of Hlobane looms above, while half-way up the Zunguin a grass fire glows red against the pitchy blackness.

In the morning I find that there are several kraals in the neighbourhood, some of whose occupants are not slow to look me up, and I take the opportunity of compassing a guide in order to make the ascent. A young Zulu, who had taken part in the fight, volunteers, and we start. Hlobane rises to a height of about 1,000 feet from the plain; its summit, some three miles in length, is in the shape of an irregular lozenge, whose western point connects by a high razor-like ridge with Entendeke, a steep table topped mountain. With horses it can only be ascended on the eastern side, to wit, that farthest from Kambúla, and at one point on the southern, which I chose as being nearest my camp.

What a climb it is! A narrow zigzag cattle path hollowed into holes, or with huge stones to be got over like so many steps in a flight of stairs. And steep—it is like making the ascent of a high-pitched roof. Riding is out of the question most of the way, so I resign my pony to Andries, who,



ARNDT, Peter

HLOBANE MOUNTAIN.
WESTERN SIDE

poor fellow, is puffing and blowing like a traction engine. The guide, however, doesn't seem to mind it at all, skipping merrily from stone to stone, as if swarming up a thousand feet of nearly perpendicular ascent were the most enjoyable of recreations; he grins and shows all his white teeth gleefully, as from the top of a rock he surveys my distressful and perspiring countenance, and chucks me one of his kerries to aid my efforts. But everything comes to an end, and so, eventually, does our climb, and we find ourselves on the summit, which is quite flat, with a stream of clear water running right across it.

Hlobane is totally unlike any of the adjacent mountains; its steep slopes culminate in a belt of sheer cliff round whose base rocks and boulders lie piled in rugged confusion, giving the idea that at some time or other the top of the mountain has fallen away all round, as indeed must have been the case. Many of these rocks are of enormous size, and it was among the holes and caves formed by them that the Zulus lay in wait for our men when they stormed the mountain. Beneath the southern cliff is the site of one of Umbelini's strongholds, with part of the wall of the cattle enclosure still standing, and from his eyrie-like position that bold marauder commanded a view of the tract below. From the eastern side I could

make out a white cross on the slope beneath, the grave of some victim of the fatal day. All too sadly frequent are these monuments in the wilderness.

The Zulus whom I found at the waggon on my return had all taken part in the fight, and their account of it was briefly this:—About the middle of the morning a British force arrived from Kambúla camp and reconnoitred round the mountain, looking for a place whereby to effect an ascent. The Zulus at the top, consisting of Umbelini's men and the Abaqulusi (to which clan my informants belonged) were carefully watching the horsemen, and being pretty sure that the west side of the mountain would be the one attacked, lost no time in getting into position among the caves. It was no use; they shot one or two of the officers, but the British pressed on, dislodging them, and, gaining the summit, drove them into cover among the rocks at the sides. They could not tell the time about, for it was a rainy day and the sun not visible, but it must have been late in the afternoon when an *impi* appeared on the opposite hills. When the Zulus on the mountain saw the *impi* they stole round behind the British so as to cut off their retreat, whereupon these made for the western point, and the Zulus charging in upon them from behind, drove them towards Entendeke. I have

said that the latter was connected with Hlobane by a narrow ridge, but to reach this about a hundred feet of steep precipitous ground has to be got over—a regular drop—a place that no one would dream of riding down in cold blood. Down it, then, however, our men had to go, the savages charging them with fierce shouts, terrifying to madness the already frightened horses, many of which, losing their foothold, rolled over and over down the fearful declivity. Other Zulus swarmed round the bases of the western cliffs to cut off the fugitives, who were flying in the utmost disorder, some mounted, others on foot, and meanwhile that terrible legion was sweeping across the plain, thousands and thousands of relentless foes, advancing rapidly and surely, utterly to annihilate the whole reconnoitring party. Many of these were killed among the boulders on Hlobane, others on the ridge, while others again, who were unhorsed, were cut off on the plain beneath. The fugitives, mounted and on foot, made for Kambúla camp, distant across country some twelve or fifteen miles. ‘A great many were killed,’ concluded my informant, ‘on the flats along the base of the Zunguin, and not until dark did the pursuit cease.’

I asked them about Grandier, the Frenchman who was supposed to have been captured during

the retreat from Hlobane, and to have escaped by killing one of his guards while being taken to Umbelini's clan for execution. They said that a white man had been taken prisoner and brought to Ulundi; that Cetywayo had questioned him, and had then sent him back under an escort, with orders that he should be let go near Hlobane, so that he could find his way to the English camp, but they knew nothing about the killing of the guard. Their statement agreed with that of other Zulus whom I interrogated on the subject in various parts of the country.

There are improbabilities about the Frenchman's story which certainly seem to need accounting for. His escape was avowedly made during the halt after the first march, to wit, within a few miles of Ulundi. But in that case it would not take long for the surviving guard to return at full speed and raise the country on the fugitive's heels, whose recapture would be but a question of a very few hours. Then, again, from Ulundi to the Zunguin, where Grandier was picked up, is a little matter of fifty miles as the crow flies, and a good deal more by any known track; further, it is extremely rugged and mountainous, as the foregoing pages may have served to show. How, then, could this man, on foot and without food, find his way across an unknown wilderness,

exposed, as he would be, to the glance of Zulu scouting parties patrolling the hills? On the other hand, it may fairly be asked what motive would Cetywayo have for sparing the life of a prisoner—an unusual act of leniency on the part of a savage chief—exasperated too, as he would naturally be, by the defeat of his forces at Kambúla and the loss of hundreds of his best warriors. Unless it were that the King had heard how some Zulu prisoners had been tended by our surgeons, or, with a desperate sense of his ultimate downfall coming more and more home to him, thought by this act of clemency to commend himself more readily to our sympathies when his day came, and take a step in the direction of agreeing with his adversary quickly. Again, should Grandier's narrative be correct in every particular, it might be that the survivor of the two men who guarded him, fearing to go back and tell the King how ill he had acquitted himself of his charge, had simply made himself scarce and said nothing, which would account for the Frenchman not being recaptured. But whatever may be thought of the tale, the Zulus all agree that the King's orders were for the release of the captive.

While camped beneath Hlobane I would frequently roam about alone, exploring its rugged fastnesses. One evening, when scrambling up an

exceptionally stony path, momentarily expecting to be obliged to turn back, a sudden start and a snort from my pony caused me to look up. Within a few yards, leaning against a rock, stood a couple of stalwart savages calmly watching me. I saw that one of them carried an assegai with a blade like a small claymore, and, seeing, coveted and resolved to have it if possible. I climbed to where they stood; the warriors greeted me as usual, 'Inkos!' and of course were anxious to know all about me. The one with the assegai was a fine, tall fellow, with a cheery countenance and hearty manner, and we speedily became friends; the other, dark, taciturn, and unprepossessing, I didn't much like the look of. But he of the assegai did his companion's share of *indaba* and his own too. He belonged to the Udhloko regiment, and had been present at the attack on Rorke's Drift, which battle he proceeded to fight over again for my enlightenment with an effusiveness and pantomimic accompaniment thoroughly Zulu; going into fits of laughter over it, as though one of the toughest struggles on record were the greatest joke in the world. At a judicious moment I produced some 'gwai,' which was received with acclamation, even my saturnine friend's dark countenance expanding into a grin. Then taking up the assegai I began to examine it, suggesting

that we should make an exchange, and throwing out all sorts of inducements. Not a bit of it; the jovial warrior would about as soon think of parting with his head-ring—or his head. He had fought with that very weapon ‘kwa Jim’ (Rorke’s Drift) &c. &c.; no, he couldn’t give it away on any account. It was a splendid specimen of a spear, but on no terms could I obtain it.

The sun had gone down, the hush of evening had fallen upon the lone mountain side and upon the dark forms of the two Zulus where they stood among the grey rocks, while a few yards beneath, my horse, saddled and bridled, was quietly cropping the short grass which sprouted up between the stones. And in thorough keeping with the surroundings was the tall lithe figure of the savage standing on the stony ledge in relief against the sky, and, as he narrated some incident, waving an arm with graceful gesture over the panorama of plain and mountain rolling away into the far distance. As we stood there in friendly converse, representatives of the two nations, civilised and barbarous, who had fought so fiercely and poured each other’s blood like water upon the rugged sides of this very mountain, I longed for the limner’s art that I might place the scene upon canvas there and then. The darkness crept on apace; dimly faded the cliffs above into shadowy gloom, and far

away upon the plain beneath, the tent of my waggon was just visible like a white speck. And now my friend who had done all the talking signified his intention of going home ; so picking up his assegai he strode off with a cheery farewell, followed by his companion. A light shone forth on the mountain side a little way off, where, perched eyrie-like on a kind of ledge, stood a small kraal consisting of three or four huts, and I could see the brown figures of the two Zulus making their way thither among the rocks and long grass.

Before leaving Hlobane I wanted thoroughly to explore the line of retreat, so starting the waggon early one morning on the road to Kambúla, I rode off alone with that intent. Skirting the Entendeke I worked round to the western side and began the ascent, which was very like that already described, except that it made up in steepness for not being so stony ; in some places the horse could barely keep his feet, and I expected every moment to see him roll over. On, higher and higher, up a stony gully rendered slippery by the trickle of a thread of water. Here I picked up an ordinary metal button half embedded in the soil, but of other relics I found none, though on the look-out for them ; and at last after a toilsome and dangerous climb—even a sprained ankle in that out-of-the-way place assumes serious proportions, and

precipices abound—I reached the top, and cantering along its smooth level stood upon the narrow ridge. Looking at the piles of rocks and boulders leading up to the summit of Hlobane, full well could I realise the utter confusion which must have characterised the rush of a crowd of horsemen down that fearful place. Nor when they gained the ridge would things be much better, for over and above its narrowness and the almost precipitous slopes on either side, it is stony to a degree, and many a dangerous crevice lies hidden away in the long grass. A cairn of loose stones on the ridge marks the spot where the brave old Dutch commandant, Piet Uys, fell.

Something of indescribable desolation seemed to haunt the place, as though one were standing alone outside the world. Heavy clouds were gathering in the west, and the morning breeze came in fitful puffs, singing through the long grass as through the strings of a harp, then leaving a stillness as of death. Directly opposite towered Zunguin's lofty head, huge and sullen; while the northern slope of Hlobane fell in one bold sweep a descent of more than a thousand feet, and the eye wandered over savage ravines and frowning krantzes farther and farther to many a distant peak in the Transvaal and Swaziland. Far away I could see my waggon with its twelve black oxen, crawling

along like a centipede, but not a sound came up to that silent ledge, poised, as it were, between earth and heaven, the abode of an almost supernatural stillness. As I turned to follow the line of flight, I thought how small were the odds in favour of those who had to race for their lives, with the dark sweeping mass moving so swiftly over the plain to cut off their retreat. The summit of Entendeke is smooth enough, which may have had something to do with affording the fugitives a start upon beginning their hard race ; once over the brow the trial begins. In cold blood the descent was difficult enough ; the sides were like glass, and one would slip and slide perhaps a dozen yards before able to pull up, at imminent peril of being shot over one of the many precipices which break the continuity of the slopes. But the idea of charging blindly down at breakneck pace made one shudder. At last I stood beneath, on Zunguin's Neck, myself and steed uninjured, but not half sorry to be down again, and considerably out of breath after the climb and the descent.

CHAPTER XXII.

A 'stick,' but in the mud—'Dutch spoken here'—'Philip drunk'—
More rain—A Republican—Kambúla—Zulu account of the battle
—Relics—A cemetery in the wilderness—Back to the border.

KAMBULA is, as before stated, about fifteen miles from Hlobane across country, but by road nearly double that distance. I ride along the base of the desolate Zunguin range; here and there a swamp has to be crossed or a détour made to avoid a long reach of water; twice having cleared a deep runnel my pony sinks to his knees on the brink in the boggy, treacherous soil, nearly pitching me over his head; but the game little rascal scrambles through—as what will a Basuto pony not scramble through?—and we hold on our way. Past Seketwayo's kraal, lying there at the base of the mountain, which chief, though ruler of one of the districts and a man of rank and lineage, is not an interesting person, and to tell the truth I am getting just a little anxious to take the homeward track again; wherefore I deny myself the pleasure

of looking him up, and keep straight on till I overtake the waggon. That trusty vehicle, however, is at a standstill, both front wheels sticking hard and fast in a swampy runnel, while a little old Zulu with an enormous assegai stands placidly contemplating the joint efforts of its three perspiring guardians to effect an extraction. In vain does Fani brandish his long whip and execute a series of appalling 'cracks,' in vain does Mlamvu tug doggedly and despairingly at the leading 'touw,' in vain do Fani and Andries combine in calling down dire maledictions on the horned heads of 'Windvogel,' and 'Bckvel,' and 'Kwaaiman,' and 'Mof,' and threaten those longsuffering animals with magnified extermination—they, in common with their brethren in the yoke, are doing their level best and can do no more—the wheels remain fast embedded in the black sticky earth. Unlashing the spade and pick, we dig away furiously for a space, thus affording a short rest to the panting span as well as smoothing the way. Crack, crack—goes the whip; we yell frantically in chorus; 'a long, long pull, and a strong, strong pull,' the machine sways and jolts, and emerges uninjured; the little old Zulu, thinking there is no more to be seen, trots off on his way, and we resume ours.

But now we are getting into the 'Disputed

Territory,'¹ and signs of Dutch vicinity may be detected in the phraseology of the natives. The old familiar greeting, 'Inkos!' ringing out, with the poetry of the wilderness about it, changes to the common-place and low-sounding 'Moro Baas' (Good morning, Master); now and then 'Ja' takes the place of the emphatic 'Ehé!' and enterprising individuals even try their hand at Dutch colloquy. We pass between several kraals; outside of one stands a ramshackle cart containing the wares of some half-caste Dutch trader, the beneficial results of whose mission soon manifest themselves in the shape of a couple of tall, savage-looking Zulus, both extremely drunk, who reel up to the waggon boisterously demanding all sorts of things. With the greatest difficulty do we keep them from tumbling under the wheels as they stagger alongside, and at last, to get rid of them, I chuck them a box of matches, which has the desired effect, and, quite pleased, the fellows roll back to their kraal, to absorb more alcohol and probably to finish by breaking each other's heads and those of their neighbours—unfortunately, not the trader's.

We outspanned that night at what is known as the Old Hunting Road. A grey mist had settled

¹ A strip of country on the Transvaal border, between the Pongolo and the Blood River, claimed by the Boers, but awarded to the Zulus by the Boundary Commission which sat at Rorke's Drift in February 1878.

down upon the land, and a chill wind blew in violent gusts ; the firewood, having been wetted by a shower during the day, declined to ignite ; then, to crown all, with scarcely any warning a violent thunderstorm broke over us, and in ten minutes' time every pot and kettle was in requisition to catch the leakages through the waggon tent : fire being out of the question in the drenching rain which ploughed up the road into a very morass.

Morning dawned on the far from cheerful scene ; the rain had ceased, but heavy fog still hung in masses about the hills ; there was no sign of the sun, and it behoved us to wait for the ground to dry a little before resuming progress. While sitting on the waggon box smoking the pipe of patience, I descried a horseman coming up the road—travellers had hitherto been like the proverbial angelic visitations, few and far between, wherefore I inspected this one with some curiosity as he reined in. He was a rather respectable-looking Dutchman, grey bearded and chimney-pot hatted ; moreover spoke English well. Now the Boer as a rule is modest in the display of linguistic attainments even if possessed of any, in fact does not attempt the English tongue unless he be—to use a nautical phrase—‘ three sheets in the wind ; ’ even then his performance is an indifferent one. But in this instance my friend was eminently sober, and

talked the Queen's English rather fluently. I began to suspect I had to do with some Transvaal magnate, the more so that he seemed anxious to get upon the topic of the late rebellion, saying that he had fought on the side of 'the Republic.'

'Didn't I think the whole affair had been a great mistake?'

'Yes, I rather thought it had.'

At this my friend became quite animated, and after some more talk on the subject, appealingly asked whether I was of opinion that we should be any the better for the possession of the Transvaal. I stood up and looked round for a minute upon the bare, treeless wastes, the desolate ranges and dark sad peaks northward, and was able conscientiously to reply in the negative. Whereat my interlocutor seemed puzzled whether to look disappointed or pleased; I think the former sentiment predominated, for he almost immediately took his leave. He told me his name, which I have forgotten, but it was not one of any note.

The road being dry enough for a move, a short *trek* brought us to Kambúla, where we outspanned within a hundred yards of the old fort.

I said that the surroundings were dismal, and verily nothing could have been more cheerless than the outlook, as, swathed in a mackintosh, I explored the site of the fort and laager amid a chilling and

continuous drizzle. But its unexhilarating entourage notwithstanding, Kambúla camp was about the best for defensive purposes I had seen in Zululand. It consisted of two *laagers* and a fort—forming an obtuse-angled triangle, the three positions being from two to three hundred yards apart. The fort occupied the highest and central point of the ridge, the two *laagers* being situated one on each side in such wise that they commanded a slope all round. The front is the worst side, as the ground falls suddenly away at a distance of about three hundred yards from the position ; in the rear is a long gradual slope. About a mile off, a desolate range of hills shuts in the view on the right front, but to the left the country is open and undulating, and it was from this direction that the *impi* first appeared. Intense must have been the expectation and excitement among the defenders as, for hours before the attack, they watched the dark masses deploying over the plain, marching steadily on, no thought of wavering in their fell purpose. And still they kept appearing, column after column, till the earth was black ; and our men would soon have an opportunity of avenging the previous day's disaster, or—not one would live to bear away the tale of this ; for in the event of defeat no mercy need be looked for from yon cloud of threatening savages sweeping along, stern and

intrepid, to annihilate the hated invader. On they came, chanting a war-song in vaunt of what they had done at Isandhlwana and would do again.

And throughout that long afternoon amid the smoke and din ; the screech of shell and rattle of volleys ; the deep-toned war-shout mingling with the scarcely less wild British cheer ; the thunderous tread of the charging myriads as again and again they surged up the incline, again and again to fall back leaving the gory slope strewn with writhing bodies—throughout that long afternoon the fate of our countrymen hung in the balance. But what could savages, however brave and well organised, effect against such a position, so staunchly defended, and with all the latest appliances, too, of nineteenth century warfare. They wavered and fled, and the previous day's disaster was amply wiped out by the utter dispersion of the flower of the martial strength of Zululand, which, leaving more than 1,000 of its bravest warriors dead around the British camp, must now go back to its King shamed and defeated, by that very circumstance warning him of his approaching downfall.

The following is the narrative of a warrior of the Tulwana regiment, a division of the Undi :—

‘ Two days before the affair at Hlobane we

started from Undini ; the King himself arranged the plan of attack and position of the regiments. When we arrived near Hlobane we heard firing and saw a number of white men fighting with the Abaqulusi on the mountain. They retreated as we advanced, but a great many were killed. We slept that night at Hlobane, marching on Kambúla the next day. The regiments were the Undi, Udhloko, Nokenke, Umpunga, Nodwengu, Kandampemvu (Umcityu), Umbonambi, and Ngobamakosi ; this last led the right "horn." The *izinduna* present were Tyingwayo, Mnyamane, Sirayo, Mavumengwane, Mundúla and Matyana-ka-Mondisi ; they watched the fight from a hill (about three miles off). When we got near the camp some horsemen came out to meet us. Then the Ngobamakosi rushed after them ; they retreated, and the Ngobamakosi in following them got quite separated from the main body of the *impi*. Then the Kandampemvu on the other side rushed on, too—there was a rivalry between the Kandampemvu and the Ngobamakosi as to who should be first in camp, so they both got on ahead, and by the time we came up to attack in front they were exhausted and almost beaten. The Undi managed to get into the cattle-laager, but were driven out again. We could not stand against the fire and had to retreat ; the two regiments forming the

“horns” were quite exhausted and useless, and we could not properly surround the position.

‘We were in smaller force than at Isandhlwana, but were sure of being able to “eat up” the English; as it is we should have done so, had not the Ngobamakosi and the Kandampemvu acted like fools. The King was very angry when we went back; he said we were born warriors, and yet allowed ourselves to be defeated in every battle, and soon the English would come and take *him*. We lost far more men at Kambúla than at Isandhlwana.’

The tumbledown wall and crumbling earthwork of the fort still crests the mound: of the two laagers one is overgrown with a crop of mealies, the other is plainly to be traced by the tent marks and scattered débris. I picked up an old gun-barrel, and a button-cleaner belonging to the 13th Regiment; bullets, too, and plenty of exploded cartridge cases lay about. On the north of the camp is a little cemetery where rest the remains of those who fell; the central monument, a stone cross, standing a conspicuous object against the surrounding waste. This enclosure is under the care of an old Zulu, who showed me his credentials from Sir Evelyn Wood, and was anxious for me to inspect the place and report well thereon. As a

matter of fact it was in very good order: in one corner the remnant of recent showers still lay, which, when I pointed out, the old fellow started off there and then for a spade and proceeded to cut a drain through the sod wall. Further down the slope, three or four dark spots of a different growth show the places of sepulture of the Zulu dead, who were buried in hundreds after the battle.

And now, having thoroughly explored the camp and its surroundings, I find there is nothing more to be done but to start for home; and, as I said before, Kambúla is not an exhilarating spot. Wherefore we inspan and roll into the road again, having made the round of the country and 'done' all the battlefields in succession, of which this is the last.

Very few days now will bring us to the border; the spirits of my 'boys' rise; even the oxen seem to know they are bound for home, and step out briskly as we hold steadily on over a bare desolate waste where the great hills with their rock-crowned summits are sleeping in their solitude. On past Bemba's Kop and along the Blood river, and away to the left rises the Munhla hill; then, as we near Itelezi, the square huts, flocks of goats, and mounted natives show that we are among Hlubi's Basutos. Then, one morning we halt on the Emponjane ridge. There, in front, some twelve

miles off, rise the blue gum trees at Rorke's Drift house, beneath the Shiyane hill ; while nearer, are the buildings of St. Augustine's Mission and Hlubi's domicile. A cheer breaks from my trusty followers, who are elate at the prospect of being speedily at home again ; nor am I disinclined to sympathise, for we have had a good spell of the rough and tumble of daily travel, and a little rest and civilisation will not come amiss.

We reach St. Augustine's in the afternoon : bidding farewell to the hospitable missionary, I start the waggon with orders to outspan on the other side of Rorke's Drift, while I ride round by Isandhlwana to pick up the post—if haply there be any—and take leave of the Bishop and his community, to whom, in memory of much kindness and of pleasant days, I here take the opportunity of wishing all success.

The following day I cross the Buffalo and am in Natal again ; and as we move along the border on the road to Helpmakaar (a different one this time), and the evening sun throws his beams full upon the rocky face of Isandhlwana, which is fading smaller and smaller behind us, and lights up with a golden lustre the broad rolling plains and the winding river, I must plead guilty to experiencing a tinge of regret that never again shall I wander through that fair land—never again hold pleasant

converse with its warrior denizens, so intrepid in defence of their country, so kindly and open-hearted now that the dark cloud of war has lifted and the red wave has flowed on.

Next morning we reach Helpmakaar without event. One more glimpse of the Zulu border, and we descend the heights of the Biggarsberg to Umsinga.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A panorama—Zulu dances—A bushbuck ‘drive’—Native hunters—
Return to Maritzburg—Afloat again.

BEING in Zululand for purposes of travel I did not lay myself out at all for sport, having no dogs for bird-shooting, and bush-hunting necessitates a regular ‘drive,’ which takes time and a little trouble to organise ; but I had an opportunity of seeing something in this line before ending my wanderings, for a border friend was kind enough to get up a bushbuck hunt on my account. He had several trading stores planted along the border, and to one of these we were to proceed, having sent up everything requisite and necessary for making a night of it.

Behold us then, four in all, mounted and ready for a start ; and before the sun has time to make his power felt, we are cantering along the grassy flats towards the mountains. Our horses pick their way gingerly across a broad slab of slippery rock, over which the water, trickling, falls into a clear pool fringed with delicate mosses and sparkling

ferns, and we enter a steep winding bush-path : mimosa branches with their sharp thorns sweep across the saddle, aloes stand about the hill side like black sentinels, and from the plumed euphorbia the turtle-dove suddenly stops her melodious 'cooing' to dash away in a flutter of alarm at the advent of the—shall I say it?—somewhat noisy group now breaking in upon the sleepy stillness of Nature. We come to a native kraal in a little hollow, whose inhabitants with their curs turn out to inspect us. 'Now then, you fellows,' sings out my friend, 'tumble out and go on up and help drive; we've sent up a cow for you to kill to-night when it's all over.' 'Yeh-bo'nkos!' they reply vociferously, for the prospect of a good bush hunt culminating in beef and jollification is more than the aboriginal mind can resist; so, diving into the huts, the jovial barbarians soon reappear with assegais and shields, and, with their curs at their heels, start off gleefully for the scene of operations. We pass other kraals, whose occupants are already on the move and preparing to follow in the ruck; more and more stony becomes the path, and steeper withal, till at last we have to dismount and lead our steeds. But we will pause here for a moment and look around. There is the Biggarsberg range, at whose base the roofs of the public offices and Sand Spruit buildings

show out against the plain. Yonder, the huge cone of Eléngé towers above the surrounding heights ; far beneath, the Tugela is winding like a serpent through its deep wild valley ; and many a lofty mountain heaves its bare head to the sky, its wooded sides falling in abrupt sweeps, to lose themselves in the vast sea of forest, which, undulating in mighty waves of slope and ravine, now gentle, now bold and forbidding, stretches, far as the eye can reach, into misty dimness. Here a huge krantz rears its frowning wall ; there a mighty rock, which, detaching itself from some overhanging cliff, has rolled down, and now lies firmly embedded in the midst of the bush. Here and there, in a small cleared space, stands a native kraal with its quaint circle of huts ; and the eye ranges at will, far and wide, over the roll of mountain and valley and plain to the lofty peaks of distant Kahlamba looming in shadowy outline through the soft haze. And standing thus in the golden sunshine and warm air, it strikes me that a more gloriously magnificent panorama would be difficult to find.

But forward—so cresting the brow of the height we turn our backs upon the splendid scene and gallop over the wide grassy plains opening out in front, along which at intervals may be seen a line of natives in twos and threes, mounted and afoot, all making in the same direction. Another

hour's ride and we draw up at a small rough-looking building standing at the head of a valley, affording a picturesque peep of the Tugela winding through the bush beneath ; while immediately around, the broad green leaves and waving plumes of standing corn rustle in the breeze. This is the place of rendezvous. The house, which is a trading store, has two rooms, one being fitted up with counter, shelves, &c., such as I have already described earlier in this narrative ; the other apparently doing duty as kitchen, larder, and bedroom put together, for the half of a buck hangs in front of the fireplace, and a 'stretcher' stands against the wall on one side of the apartment.

We dismount ; crowds of natives are standing, sitting, and lolling about in every conceivable attitude, talking, chattering, and laughing, in fact kicking up an indescribable and deafening shindy ; dogs sneak in and out, getting into everyone's way and being kicked and yelling accordingly. Plenty of these are there, by the way ; curs black, brown, and grey ; curs white and curs brindled ; in short, curs of every shade and colour. The Zulu dogs are mostly a kind of greyhound or lurcher ; in the bush they will run down anything previously wounded, but for speed are nowhere.

I am introduced to the chief, a stout pleasant-looking man rejoicing in the name of Mawéle, with

whom my friend seems to be on the best possible terms. Presently an unmistakable sound is heard, and lo, a fresh body of natives, some fifty strong, appears, marching in a square and singing a war song; the suppressed fierceness of the strange wild chant forming a perfect accompaniment to the rattle of assegais and shields and the measured tread of many feet. They file into the open space, stand motionless for a moment, and at a sign from their leader fall out and disperse.

But it is too soon to start yet, and to while away the time the natives get up a dance. They stand in a semicircle several ranks deep, with their shields and knob-kerries, the master of ceremonies with his small white shield in front. He gives the signal; a kind of weird quartet is heard in the ranks, first very softly, then taken up by one after another, but still softly, all keeping time with their feet; presently it grows louder and louder, and the whole crowd seems labouring under the intensest of suppressed excitement. They turn themselves half round, first to this side, then to that, but never budging an inch from their places, and the earth shakes beneath the thunder of their feet as they bring them to the ground like one man. They clash their knob-kerries and shields together; they roar like wild beasts; but never for a moment do you lose the modulation of the fantastic

harmony, the rhythm of the strange, fierce, thrilling chant to which you feel yourself unconsciously beating time ; and an irresistible longing comes over you to seize a kerrie, throw yourself into the rout, and stamp and howl with the best of them.

The ground is quivering beneath the tread of many feet, eyeballs gleam and start from their sockets, the clash of knob-kerries and shields is deafening, the hill tops echo back the savage fury of the unearthly chant, the excitement is wrought to the highest pitch, when—the master of ceremonies gives a slight signal, and the whole of that frenzied crowd becomes still and motionless as statues. A few minutes of rest, of panting and blowing after the violent exertion, and the sign is given. Again the ‘choragi’ lead off, the crowd takes up another song, and the fun waxes fast and furious till the word goes forth to prepare for a start. Assegais and kerries are collected, among much clatter ; dogs, nosing out their owners, fall in behind them ; and all move off. Some of the Zulus form up into companies and march for the scene of operations humming a hunting song ; others go off by twos and threes to their assigned places, and mounting our horses we make for where we shall get the best chance of a shot and see most of the drive, for the natives have no idea of our having all the sport to ourselves.

A short ride brings us to a grassy 'neck ;' in front lies a wide bush-covered valley, and round the hillside on our right a growing clamour points to the approach of the beaters. Far away on the other side of the bush can be seen the dark forms of the native hunters drawing in their line and working up towards us, while eager groups stand ready with assegai and kerrie. A rush, a shout, and a prolonged yell from the curs—a buck is up and away, and we can trace his course by the agitation among the bush beneath as he springs through it. Those who have rifles—it is too far for shot guns—make for a point commanding an open space which the quarry must cross. Bang, bang!—a cloud of dust flies round the startled antelope ; it was a near shave. Bang!—again the dust rises behind him, but he is in the thick bush, and safe ; and a string of dogs, black, brown, and grey, crosses the open, yelling like fiends, on his track. But the sight of quarry has roused the latent instinct of destruction in Briton and native alike, and we are all tenfold on the *qui vive*. The hunt sweeps on ; hark!—a warning shout. Look at those two Zulus down there, how they listen for a moment and run forward noiselessly as shadows. They stand, eyeballs starting and nostrils dilated, in an attitude of intense expectancy, still, motionless like bronze statues, one foot advanced, head

and shoulders bent forward in a panther-like crouch, in the right hand a long tapering assegai. Nearer and nearer comes the crashing of the under-wood, the bushes part, and a graceful form leaps lightly into the glade within a few yards of them. It is a young bushbuck ram, and the sun glints on the points of his shiny black horns and lustrous eye as he catches sight of his human foes, and, with a frightened start, leaps off at a tangent. Well for him that he does, or he would at this moment be lying transfixed in his death throes, for the murderous spear grazes his shoulder as he turns, and the blade sticks quivering in the ground. Zip!—another assegai flashes through the air, and the ill-fated antelope plunges and rolls over and over. The two Zulus raise an exultant whoop, but no, not yet; he is up again, and whisking his white tail defiantly, bounds safe into the friendly bush. But he is hard hit and will not go far. Dogs are called, and the two Zulus, stooping to pick up the gore-stained assegai, dash into the bush on the heels of the pack. A yell—a chorus of clamour—a scream—as the bloodthirsty curs throw themselves upon their quarry, and the successful hunters, rushing up, rescue it from the mauling of their fangs and raise the wild death shout, which is taken up and echoed from a hundred throats.

Hitherto the beaters have had all the fun to themselves, but as the rout moves on a shot is heard in the thick of the bush, and one of our party has given a good account of something. And now we are riding along the brink of a mighty precipice ; a rugged peak towers above ; beneath, the forest trees rear their heads against the cliff, and the slope falls away into the broad valley. A wilder or more picturesque scene would not easily be found. On all sides the great mountains are sleeping in the golden light of the waning afternoon ; far below, the Tugela winds and twists on its serpentine course ; but the solemn stillness of Nature on a grand scale is rudely broken in upon, for the whole valley is alive with glistening dark forms flashing through the verdure, and mingling with the baying of their hounds the shouts of the savages are borne on the quiet air.

No bad place for a full view of the hunt is the brow of this same cliff. Extended for about a mile through the bush beneath, a line of Zulus is sweeping on, and we can spy the many-coloured hides of their dogs zig-zagging about in the grass. See, there is a rush towards one spot ; a buck is away and the whole pack stringing after him. Spear after spear is hurled, and yet he keeps on ; we can still follow his flight and make out his

white 'plume.' But he has his work cut out for him before he can clear that fatal circle, for look ! there is another group of dark hunters lying in wait. He sees it too, and literally flies past. Assegais gleam for a moment in a perfect shower, and—the white tuft no longer flits through the bushes. The game little antelope lies on the ground a brown, kicking heap, and the pack comes pouring open-mouthed on to the carcase ; snapping and snarling and tumbling over each other in their eagerness to seize it. Again the loud death-whoop peals through the valley, but before its echoes have died away among the rocks and krantzes, another shout announces the starting of fresh quarry. Thoroughly roused now, only eager for something to slay, they press forward, and the ground is alive with the dark forms of excited savages pouring like ants through the green bush, as some of those high up on the mountain side succeed by a whistle and a yell in slightly turning the buck's course so as to bring him nearer to the party beneath ; but he has a good start and evidently intends to make the most of it. A few assegais are launched at him, but he is out of 'throw' even for the most powerful and dexterous arm, and they fall harmlessly short. A clamour from the dogs as they rush off on his track, but, blunderheaded brutes, they have been such a long

while thinking about it that he can afford to laugh at the lot; besides, he is unscathed and they haven't a chance. So away he goes, and we can see him 'ricochetting' along, a mere speck, far down there by the river, eluding his fate this time, to meet with it by assegai or bullet in a future 'drive,' or haply to fall a prey to some prowling leopard on the moonlit river-bank in the hush of the still, warm night.

So intent am I watching the progress of the hunt, that I hardly notice a brown shape bounding across an open space at the foot of the cliff, or only take it for one of the Zulu dogs ranging on his own account. It is a buck though, and I only awake to the fact when too late for a shot; but another of the party, more wary, has delivered the contents of both barrels just as the animal is disappearing among the scrub. Effectively, too, as again that wild shout proclaims, the stricken antelope running blindly into the clutches of a group of beaters. But the afternoon is waning; it is exceedingly hot, and the natives are beginning to have had enough. We, too, are rather disappointed at the sport not being livelier, for scarce half a dozen shots have been fired by our party, all told. But for my part I am easily consoled with the thought that not for the satisfaction of bringing down the whole 'bag' to my own gun

would I have missed such an opportunity of watching the affair from beginning to end, and seeing the natives hunt in their own fashion.

And now it is all over ; the Zulus come straggling up from the valley in long lines, and, gathering on the brow of the cliff, pause for a short rest before starting homewards. We count head—four bushbucks and a rock rabbit constitute the spoil ; might have been worse considering that the day was somewhat advanced when we began. I suppose I ought to say that I shot something ; the fact, however, remains unmistakably that I did not ; indeed I had no opportunity of so much as letting off my gun, barring the chance just detailed. But, as before stated, I had a splendid view of the whole affair.

We ride slowly back ; the natives straggle across the *veldt*, chattering volubly over the events of the afternoon. While we are offsaddling at the store, the weird rhythm of a savage song is heard, drawing nearer and nearer. The Zulus are bringing in the spoils of the hunt ; the peculiar shivering sound of the loose bundles of assegais which they carry (like no other sound I ever heard) mingles with the regulated tramp of feet, and the dark column marches into the open space ; the perspiration pouring down the glistening hides of the native hunters, as depositing their weapons

they throw themselves wearily on the ground for a rest.

But they will be lively enough soon, for the cow which has been promised them is even now being driven up to meet her fate. She is young and wild ; so wild, indeed, that none of them quite like going near enough to slay her in their own fashion, and one of our party takes a shot with his rifle, missing a vital part and only wounding her, for the animal is thoroughly frightened, and will not be persuaded to stand still for a single moment ; but the shot starts her off galloping wildly over the plain. With a yell the Zulus dash away in pursuit, forming a wide ring gradually narrowing round the doomed beast, who runs hither and thither. At last, lowering her head, she breaks through the circle with a fierce growling noise, as, shaking her pointed horns and throwing the foam from her mouth, she charges her pursuers, who scatter for a moment, and, closing up again, start swiftly upon her track. At length an assegai flung by a powerful arm buries its sharp blade in her heart, and the poor brute, rolling over and over, expires with a hollow moan. The savages throw themselves on the carcase like a set of vultures, and the work of butchery begins. It is not a pleasant sight though ; moreover, one man, rejoicing in the possession of a knife, perhaps gets on

quicker than his fellow who is armed only with an assegai, whereupon they quarrel, and the whole lot are fighting and tearing, gesticulating and screaming—making an unholy and indescribable din; so we leave them to themselves.

Supper over, we proceed to make merry by way of finishing up the undertaking, and the walls of the old shanty ring to the chorus of ‘John Peel’ and other ditties of world-wide and uproarious fame; and when such of us as are vocalists have exhausted our stock-in-trade and everyone has bawled himself hoarse, some of the natives—who by this have devoured the unfortunate cow, I was going to say even to the skin and horns—are got in and go through their fantastic dance to the accompaniment of a wild war song. The shindy at last becomes deafening, and having had enough of it we eject them; then, rolling ourselves in blankets, turn in beneath the counter of the store—to sleep, if haply we may.

Next morning we return to Sand Spruit, and once more the *veldt* is black with natives who have borne part in the chase and are now on the way home again. An example it behoves me to follow, so taking leave of my brethren of the hunt I inspan and resume the even tenour of my way. Umsinga is left far behind, we cross the Tugela—this time on the pontoon—and wind up the steep rocky

road, to halt on the top of the high ridge overlooking Mooi river. And, next day, as we descend, my thoughts go back to that hot sunny morning we toiled up this very bit of road months before, then starting on a new expedition, every yard in front *terra incognita*. To-day it seems very much *cognita* does that large tract of country over which I have wandered and am now leaving behind, and yet I am not half sorry to return to civilisation ; albeit my trip, with all its ups and downs, has been far from wearisome and replete with interest throughout. Crossing the Mooi river we wind through the wild and beautiful valley, and eventually reach Grey Town, where I part with Andries, my right hand man, and plod quietly on with the other two. Then, having covered the forty miles of road between that place and Maritzburg, I ride into the capital one fine afternoon, travel-stained and externally the worse for wear, flannel-shirted and corduroyed, with countenance fiercely tanned and blistered by much exposure to the gentle rays of a South African sun—in short, looking an awful ruffian—but more thoroughly ‘fit’ and in ruder health than ever before in my life.

A week or two to rest and sell off, a run down to Durban by rail, a few days there, then a bumping over the ‘bar,’ and I am once more on board ship—but, reader, I have not done with you just yet.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Cetywayo at 'Oude Molen'—The King on John Dunn—Former position of Cetywayo—Ncungwane and the royal attendants—Homeward bound.

LAST, but not least, was my visit to Cetywayo, at the Cape. Armed with a pass from the Secretary for Native Affairs, without which no one is admitted, I took the train out to Mowbray and made my way to 'Oude Molen,' otherwise described as the 'State Prisoners' Location,' where the ex-monarch of Zululand was in durance. About half an hour's walk by a very roundabout way brought me to the place, a building looking as if it might have been a Dutch farmhouse, with stabling and outhouses, but devoid of trees, and standing in the midst of the open flat.

There was no lack of visitors to the ex-King; since the restrictions on seeing him were removed, every day, nearly, one or more parties would arrive at Oude Molen. Having awaited the departure of one of these, I sent in my card to the interpreter, Mr. Dunn, and was admitted. In a front room destitute of furniture but a few chairs,

sat the once redoubted potentate, a large, quiet-looking man of between fifty and sixty, dressed in a suit of light tweed, with a yellow embroidered smoking cap on his head. Cetywayo is darker than most Zulus, and has a broad, intelligent face, with good eyes and pleasing expression—on the whole a well-looking man, dignified and courteous in manner, as are nearly all Zulus of rank, and though of large proportions, not corpulent or unwieldy. The Zulu royal family is proverbial among the nation for stateliness of carriage, and the King is no exception, holding himself very erect, with his head slightly thrown back, as though accustomed to look upon those around him as inferiors.

He shook hands, saying he was glad to see me, but learning that I had just returned from Zululand, his face became quite animated over the prospect of hearing about all his old friends and subjects, and through the courtesy of Mr. Dunn, Cetywayo's official interpreter, we were able to have a long chat.

‘It was good,’ said the King; ‘where had I been, and whom had I talked to?’

I began from the very first, and he listened attentively, putting in a remark here and there, and keeping up a running commentary throughout. He seemed intimately acquainted with every foot of

the ground I had been over, and would stop me to tell some little anecdote connected with any particular spot, or would give the personal or family history of some one I happened to name. Every now and then his eyes twinkled, and a broad smile would light up his countenance as he related some comic incident regarding the person or persons under discussion. Which goes to show that over and above an intimate acquaintance with his country and people, Cetywayo possesses a strong vein of humour.

At that time the idea of the English visit had been given up, and the unfortunate King was in a state of dire depression. 'Why wouldn't we send him back to his country? He would always be friends with the English.' I ventured to hint at his future policy in the event of restoration; besides, how could we depose the chiefs we had set up in his place? He replied that all Zululand, chiefs and people alike, would hail his return; those who didn't want to live under him could leave the country; he would not punish any of them for having taken part against him hitherto, but if they refused to return to their allegiance, they must leave his country.

I suggested that some of them might be unprepared to acquiesce in so sweeping a change in their fortunes—John Dunn and Sibepu for instance.

‘As for John Dunn (he said), he had no following ; a hundred or two of Natal natives. All the Zulus of his clan belonged to him (Cetywayo), also his wives and cattle, and they would all leave John Dunn and come back to him ; but he didn’t want *them*. John Dunn might take all his wives and all his cattle and leave the country.’ This was hardly a satisfactory answer—evidently the King was not benevolently disposed towards his former ally.

On the subject of his restoration he was very sore. ‘Why didn’t we allow him to go to England and plead his own cause ? We promised to do so at first and then put him off again. Why should we not send him back to Zululand ? We had taken him away because, we said, he killed his people, and now we had set up chiefs who did far more killing than he (Cetywayo) had ever done. Look at Uhamu, how he had been “eating up” and killing the Abaqulusi. I had been to Hlobane and must know all about it. Did I know how many people Uhamu had killed ?’

I replied that I did not, for certain.

‘Eight hundred or a thousand,’ said the King.

I expressed incredulity as to it being anything like that number, but he stuck to it—over eight hundred people had been killed by Uhamu ; he (Cetywayo) knew it for certain, and could tell me the actual names of many of the victims. When

I passed Hlobane I could hardly have seen any people about. On this point, however, I was able to set him right, for the kraals in that neighbourhood were all occupied.

Knowing well how a story gains in process of transmission among these people, much after the manner of the proverbial snowball, especially if self-interest leans to the side of exaggeration, I remained unconvinced; for although, from all accounts, Uhamu had been 'washing his spears' pretty freely, I don't believe that as a matter of fact his victims were much more than a tenth of the number estimated by Cetywayo.

I had brought with me some photographs of the King's attendants, in which he took great interest, giving me their names and family history, together with those of his women, whom I expressed a wish to see. Accordingly, they having received due notice, I was shown into the next room, where I found the ladies of the royal household, four in number, who, however, did not strike me as being anything out of the common. They were large, tall women, with a hard, not to say sulky, expression, though under the circumstances one could scarcely expect them to look cheerful. Each had her little stock of manufactures spread out on the floor, beadwork, grass spoons, &c., for which, by the way, they demanded full price. I

selected a couple of the grass spoons, paying three shillings a piece for the same—I could have got them for a tenth of the value in Zululand, but royalty has its privileges—and rejoicing their hearts with a tin of snuff, I returned to their lord.

Elsewhere in these pages I recorded my conviction that during his exile Cetywayo was about the most popular man in Zululand, and now I thought I quite saw the reason of this popularity. He has a dignified presence, looking every inch a king ; a genial and engaging manner, and now and then his face would be lighted up with a pleasing, good-humoured smile, giving one the impression that he is a man of natural kindness of heart. That a savage ruler—ay, and a civilised one for that matter—enjoying absolute despotism, should not, under the impulses of sudden passion or undoubted self-interest, be led into the perpetration of occasional acts of cruelty or severity, would be too much to expect of fallen human nature. But what I do say, judging from all I heard and saw, is that Cetywayo is not an ill-dispositioned man, of which, by the way, this fact is not a little significant, that the only one of the Zulu kings who ‘died in his bed’ was Mpande, Cetywayo’s father and predecessor ; and although for some time previous to that event Cetywayo’s power and influence

had been steadily increasing, yet he showed no eagerness for his father's death nor made any attempt to accelerate the same. Since his own accession times have become more difficult and dangerous every year, and what with Boer aggression on the one side and Natalian coldness and distrust on the other, it may readily be understood that the position of the Zulu King was not exactly a bed of roses. But that he was animated with a real desire for the welfare of his people and naturally inclined for peace, I have ceased to entertain any doubt. And now, as time goes on and the public at large is beginning to take a dispassionate view of the affair, I believe I am right in saying that an increasing opinion is growing up that he was largely the victim of surrounding circumstances, and that his downfall was not entirely due to his own delinquencies or mistakes. Of one thing I am confident, however; that many and many a potentate could be found with whom Cetywayo would compare far from unfavourably.

I took leave of the King, who expressed himself glad to have seen me and to have heard all about Zululand and his old friends. Some day perhaps, he said, I should be coming to see him in his own country (a hope that he would eventually be restored kept cropping up throughout his conver-

sation); then he could receive me better, and meanwhile I must be his friend and think well of him.

Passing from the 'royal audience' I looked in upon the attendants, the principal of whom, Ncungwane, an elderly man with grizzled hair, is a relation of the King; most of them being men of rank and fine specimens of their race. Poor fellows, how different they looked, huddling gloomy and taciturn round the fire as the chill evening of a Cape winter day drew in, to the cheerful, lively, good-humoured people I had left in the sunshine and free air on the green hills and plains of Zululand. They brightened up considerably on hearing that I had just been into their old haunts and among their countrymen, and it seemed to me quite like old times standing there, surrounded by the ringed heads and kindly dark faces. But it was too late for much *indaba*, so dividing a canister of snuff amongst the group, I departed and made my way back to the station.

Another twenty-four hours and I am on the deck of the homeward-bound mail steamer, having trodden South African soil for the last time. The steam is up, the shore-bell rings, hurried 'good-byes' are exchanged, the swarming decks clear by magic of three fourths of their living freight, and amid a cheer from the crowd on the jetty the great

ship moves off into the blue waters of Table Bay. We pass Robben Island with its lighthouse ; fainter and indistinct grows the rocky wall of Table Mountain till it fades into the gloom of night, and we stand forth upon our course over the wide ocean—*en route* for Old England.

CHAPTER XXV.

Zululand under the Ulundi settlement—Restoration of Cetywayo—
Military system and tactics—Zulu opinion of the Boers—Zulu
character and physique—Religion and superstitions—Formation
and appearance of the country—Climate—Wild animals.

PASSING reference has been made in these pages to a feeling of unrest prevailing among the Zulus. As a matter of fact the country at that time, though to all appearances quiet and peaceful, was not really so; for beneath the outward calm lay a strong feeling of discontent, but one degree removed from open agitation and actual outbreak.

The results of what is known as the Ulundi settlement had begun to make themselves felt. The chiefs set up under that settlement being, with few exceptions, absolute nobodies, were held in scant honour, and were practically of but small power in the land. Of those exceptions Uhamu had earned the contempt of his countrymen by his defection from their cause; Hlubi was an alien, and never had any claim to the allegiance of a single

Zulu ; leaving Tyingwayo, Sibepu, and John Dunn. Powerful *indunas* like Mnyamane, who, by the way, has the reputation of being the shrewdest man in Zululand, were left out in the cold at the time of the settlement of the country, and no notice was taken of any of the King's brothers. Small matter of surprise, then, is it that these worthies, supremely dissatisfied, should sedulously gather round them the disaffected, and hatch plots for the restoration of Cetywayo, with whom had departed their own former glory and *prestige*. Whether there would have been so much outcry for the royal restoration had the country been portioned out between Mnyamane and four or five other influential *indunas* is fair subject for conjecture ; I myself am inclined to think there would not. But under the Ulundi settlement the population soon became divided into two hostile camps, sullenly watching each other with an ill-will they were at no pains to conceal—the Usútu faction, with Mnyamane and Ndabuku, Cetywayo's brother, at its head, on the one hand ; on the other Sibepu, John Dunn, and Uhamu for the maintenance of the Ulundi scheme ; while the remaining chiefs either stood neutral and trimmed between the rival parties, or attached themselves to the one or the other according as self-interest prompted. But the differing interests did more than sit and

growl at each other. Sibepu would threaten Ndabuku, and, under colour of a row about some cattle (always a fruitful source of quarrel in Zululand), Mnyamane would make a raid upon Sibepu, who, of course, would retaliate: meanwhile Uhamu amused himself by 'eating up' a clan of the Abaqulusi in his own territory. The British Resident, having no force at his disposal, could effect little or nothing towards the adjustment of these and other small differences; and everyone appeared to do pretty much as he chose. All seemed tending, and that not slowly, in the direction of a general blaze.

Then came a lull. A large Zulu deputation started for Maritzburg, and, although it rather ignominiously returned, yet the circumstance of the people having an opportunity of even partially making known their grievance formed, in a measure, a safety-valve. Moreover, the idea of Cetywayo's restoration had been entertained, soon to take tangible shape in his visit to England. Then the 'royalist' chiefs in Zululand knew that the desired restoration was but a question of time, and that nothing would be gained meanwhile by turbulence and rebellion.

And now that the King's rule has been re-established, whether the looked-for result—to wit, the re-establishment of peace and contentment—is

attained, must depend largely on the policy of the future. That policy it is not within the province of these pages to discuss. Suffice it to say, that Cetywayo himself has no right to be dissatisfied with the terms of his restoration or with the territory allotted to him, the latter being far the greater portion of his former dominion, the whole of which by Zulu law of conquest belongs to us. He could not expect to be put into precisely the same position as before, after the expenditure of blood and treasure we had made in order to remove him from that position, and it must be borne in mind that he was not himself entirely free from blame in the matter of the late war ; wherefore, in all reason, not to say wisdom, he and his people should ' let well alone ' and be thankful.

Formerly looked up to as the despotic head of the most invincible and dreaded of all the native races, Cetywayo has lived to see his rule overthrown, his formidable armies scattered like chaff, and himself carried off to languish in tedious and, to one of his temperament, soul-wearing captivity, only to be emancipated by suing at the very feet of the Power whom in the heyday of his renown he thought to resist. May we not infer that a man of his shrewdness and sagacity will utilise the experience he has gained—in short, will have learnt a lesson.

The military system was set up by Tyaka (or Chaka), under whose influence the Zulus sprung from the small insignificant race they were at the beginning of the present century, into a nation of warriors. They carried on an aggressive warfare with the neighbouring tribes, extending their conquests far and wide: the assegai and the torch were never at rest, and their name became a terror and a scourge. Already was the Zulu army a mighty and formidable engine when Dingane, Tyaka's successor, was brought into collision with the emigrant Boers in 1838. Sanguinary conflicts with the latter, as also the civil war which resulted in the assassination of Dingane and the succession of Mpande (Panda), Cetywayo's father, had somewhat cooled their martial ardour; and under the rule of this King—a man of mild temper and easy-going habits—a long period of peace ensued, broken only by an occasional raid upon border tribes and the outbreak in 1856 pursuant on the feud between Cetywayo and his brother Umbulazi.

But the army, though unemployed, was not disbanded. Nearly the whole nation was enrolled in regiments according to age, and the military system and tradition remained unbroken. As a matter of fact, enrolment was not compulsory, though one of those *customs* which are stronger than law: it was open to anyone to decline to join

the army, but once enlisted, implicit obedience was exacted. Each regiment had its *induna* and its subalterns, with a commander-in-chief over the whole, and there was a wonderful *esprit de corps* throughout: indeed to such an extent did this prevail, that a fight was imminent between any two or more regiments on the occasion of a great national gathering, though all petty differences were sunk in the glory of marching against a common foe.

The tactics employed with such terrible effect against our troops are identical with those of the armies of Tyaka and Dingane; the outflanking and surrounding, the fierce, resistless, overwhelming rush, and the merciless destruction in the hour of victory of every living thing. But in one respect the mode of procedure has undergone a change. Tyaka led his warriors in person; now the *induna* in command posts himself on a hill whence he can overlook the scene of operations, with his staff around him; for there is a regular staff system consisting mainly of the head *indunas* of each of the various regiments, who, as a rule, are only a kind of 'honorary' colonel—the sub-chiefs doing all the actual work. If he sees fit, he despatches one or more of these down to communicate his plans or to effect a rally should there be signs of wavering at any particular point. In the event of defeat the

greater *indunas* lose no time in exemplifying the latter half of an old proverb—in a word, they run away and live to fight another day, or rather to see that their subordinates fight. But although the martial spirit is still alive in Zululand—every man will tell you with some pride to what regiment he belongs—cohesion has been completely destroyed by the many differing and rival interests which have cropped up within the last three years, and to re-organise the army on the old lines would be to-day next to an impossibility. I say to-day, because, as before stated, the events of the future must depend on the policy of the future.

One fine quality which the Zulus possess is a readiness to forgive and forget. They bear no malice, and, considering that, whether rightly or wrongly, we invaded their country, slaughtered thousands of their best warriors, burnt their kraals, carried off their king, and reduced them—the most powerful nation in Southern Africa—to the condition of a conquered race, it is surprising how little resentment is entertained towards us. They say it was all the ‘fortune of war,’ ‘it is past, and there’s an end of it,’ and they welcome the Englishman wherever he goes with the same cheerful and hearty greeting.

But this goodwill in no wise extends to their Transvaal neighbours, whom they hold in abhor-

rence. The very mention of the Boers would evoke strong expressions of contempt and detestation, and when pressed for a reason it was everywhere the same story. 'They are mean, and liars—always on the look-out to steal our land.' One chief told me he would like nothing better than to be allowed to lead an *impi* against the *Amabuna* (Boers). 'But,' I objected, just to see what he would say, 'don't you know that they defeated *us* at Majuba?'

'Yes,' was the reply, 'but the English could have eaten them up afterwards if they had chosen. *We* defeated the English at Isandhlwana, but where are we now? So it would have been with the *Amabuna*.'

This was looking at the affair in its proper light, which I found the Zulus did as a rule; not being at all inclined to rate Dutch prowess any higher because it had proved too much for us under certain circumstances.

The Zulu character has been greatly misrepresented. We have been accustomed to look upon this unfortunate nation as a horde of fierce untameable barbarians whose every thought is of war; rapine and massacre its *summum bonum* of existence, and among whom the most ordinary virtues are unknown—and upon its king as a tyrannical despot and a monster of cruelty. Instead, what do we find? A quiet, kindly, light-

hearted race ; sober, cleanly, and honest—loyally attached, too, to its exiled King, supposed to be such a detestable tyrant. It would be idle, of course, not to expect occasional turbulence and disquietude among a brave, warlike people with great military traditions, but I maintain that the Zulu is by nature of a quiet and kindly disposition, not wanting in generosity, and good-humoured to a degree ; in short, far from being a mere brutal savage. He has his faults indeed, and if merciless and cruel in the madness and exultation of victory, at any rate it is the blind ferocity of the wild beast whose rage is satiated with the death of an enemy, not the refined barbarity of the Red Indian or the Oriental delighting in the prolonged torments of his victim.

The physique of the Zulus has been much exaggerated. They are by no means the brawny athletes of popular notion and illustrated periodical, it being, in fact, the rarest thing to find a man with any extraordinary development of biceps ; as a rule they are smooth-limbed rather than otherwise, though tall and well built. But they make up for muscular deficiency by a wonderful suppleness and agility, being lithe and active as wild cats, and with a hardihood and constitution of iron. And they are fine-looking—in many instances handsome—men, with erect, graceful carriage and

considerable dignity of aspect. You never, for instance, see a Zulu with head sunk on his chest, or bandy-legged, or with a stoop in the shoulders. As adversaries, man for man they are not more formidable than any other race; it is the moral effect—on themselves no less than on their enemies—of the trained and disciplined regiments, the honour and glory of which, in a measure, each man feels to be centred in himself; the mighty army in all its savage panoply, and the great traditions at its back—this is what renders the Zulu attack so terrific and irresistible.

As regards religion the Zulus may be said to hold no definite belief whatever. They have no temples, no idols or gods of any kind, no priests or altars, and no recognised or national cult. They have a hazy belief in a Supreme Being whom they call 'Nkulu'nkulu,' 'the Great Great One,' and a vague tradition about creation; otherwise they are given to superstition of various kinds. You never meet a single Zulu abroad at night, very rarely any at all; if forced then to travel they go in a body. What they are afraid of they hardly know; goblins are supposed to be disporting themselves whom it is well not to meet; wherefore they do their journeying by day. I had a considerable amount of night travelling, but not one instance can I recollect of meeting a Zulu on the road an hour

after dark. Nor would they stay, if talking to me at sundown, unless their kraal was very near indeed, and only then if it was a bright moonlight evening.

They are great believers in witchcraft and the power of the evil eye. If any one is seized with an illness at all out of the common, it is *tagati* (witchcraft), and the *izanusì* (doctors) perform their incantations over the hapless patient by way of exorcising the evil spirit ; for which ' professional attendance ' the rascals take care that they are well remunerated. In the event of a chief or man of rank being afflicted, a ' smelling out ' takes place, and after much ceremonial, which has been too often described to need reiteration here, the soothsayers, singling out some obnoxious person, denounce him as the offender ; whereupon his cattle and goods are confiscated, and he and his family are fortunate if allowed to escape with their lives. That tyrannical quackery of this kind should be thus deeply rooted in the minds of a people otherwise so shrewd is simply amazing. They firmly believed in the inspiration of the *izanusì*, and although no man knew but what his turn would come next, yet they all acquiesced in the practice of ' smelling out ' as a national institution wherein nothing could shake their faith.

Signs and omens play an important part in

their scheme. Phenomena in the heavens, unusual meteorological occurrences, the flight of a particular bird, and a hundred other trifles constitute omens of greater or less importance, to explain which the 'spirits' must be consulted and sacrifices—generally of cattle—offered upon the graves of departed chiefs. Of a future state they have little if any idea, and, as before mentioned, they have a vague belief in the Deity, but of definite religion or recognised cult the Zulus have none.

The formation of the country is capricious in the extreme; elevated and smooth table-lands suddenly alternating with broad valleys and lofty mountains, and where least expected yawn deep rifts. It is not a well wooded region on the whole. Bush abounds in more or less profusion in the basins formed by the valleys of the greater rivers and in the tropical heat of the low-lying coast lands, but the larger portion of the country is open and treeless. A fine pasture land and well watered, but the broad plains and rounded slopes, waving with tall luxuriant grass, seem rather fitted for grazing than for purposes of cultivation.

What may be the hidden resources of the country I can only conjecture. Coal is talked of, and I did happen to hear significant hints about gold being found in such and such a place; as to its existence I have no doubt, whether in quantities

sufficient to prove remunerative is another thing. Some of the rivers have every appearance of being auriferous, notably the Ityotyози, which flows over a fine sandy bed, through an alluvial soil studded with quartz. A prospecting party visited this river about a year after the war, but the results not being encouraging the undertaking was abandoned.

In the matter of climate, though warm in summer, it is far from unhealthy, and the nights are delicious. In the low-lying coast country the heat is great, and has all the damp, enervating feeling of tropical latitudes, to which may be due the circumstance of the natives on the high open 'steppes' of northern and western Zululand being far superior in physique and character to their brethren of the coast. The winter months, May, June, and July, are exceedingly cold; keen, biting winds sweep across the treeless wastes, and snow and sleet are of no infrequent occurrence.

Of wild animals and birds the greater variety is met with in the bush country. The rhebok and stembok are to be shot on the open undulating plains, which also abound in quail, with here and there a sprinkling of partridges. The pauw and the koorhaan—both 'leery' birds—whom you may stalk at early morn in the long soaking grass till wet to the skin, but not by a foot can you diminish that reprehensible fifty yards which is to bring you

within range, and your quarry, tired at length of dragging you through the penetrating dew, heaves up its great carcase and flaps off with a peevish yell. The crane, with his blue slaty plumage, stalks solemnly about; and the plover circles overhead in the gloaming, sounding his shrill pipe. Spreuws whistle among the krantzies, the dainty sugar-bird¹ dips his long needle-like bill into the red tubes of the aloe blossoms, and the reed beds and bushes overhanging river or water-hole are alive with the twittering of clouds of yellow 'finks' whose pendulous nests sway and dip in the breeze. Birds of prey, too, from the huge cinereous vulture and the crested eagle to the little red kestrel, soar above the waste.

The bark of the bushbuck echoes through black, wooded ravines among whose caves and frowning krantzies the savage leopard makes his home; monkeys skip amid the gnarled boughs of the yellow-wood trees; jackals share the ground burrows with the ant bear and the porcupine, and the large striped hyæna howls along the river bank in the moonlight. The dark forests of Ingome still afford cover to the beautiful koodoo with his long spiral horns, and their wild recesses are not guiltless of lions. Northward the lonely lagoons around San Lucia Bay resound with the splash

¹ A species of humming bird.

and snort of the hippopotamus, and in the reed-fringed pools and quiet depths of the larger rivers dwell the crocodile and iguana. Of serpents, the cobra, the puff adder, and the mamba are the most dangerous, but except in certain localities are not common enough to constitute any real source of peril.

Hardly a land that one would visit in quest of sport—albeit with dogs and appliances a keen sportsman who laid himself out therefor would not do badly in this line—to the traveller it is full of interest. The inhabitants are an intelligent and kindly disposed race; above all, the climate is healthy, and anybody desiring a complete change and a few months of life in the open air, might do worse than follow my example and go ‘Through the Zulu Country.’

CONCLUSION.

THE weather is fine and the sea calm, and no event worth noticing breaks the even monotony of the voyage, which is similar in most respects to that described in the opening chapters of this narrative. In due course we pass beneath the lofty peak of Teneriffe; Madeira, with its noisy crowd of peddling natives, is left behind, and ploughing through the now calm waters of the dreaded Bay we drop anchor in Plymouth Sound.

But how different is the scene to when we last were here. Then, the fierce sou'westerly gale tearing through the leafless trees and lashing up the chill, leaden waters. Now, the golden glory of a summer evening falls upon green pasture land and luxuriant woods fringing down to the water's edge; the sinking sun sparkles upon the dancing waves and darts his last beams afar upon the snowy wings of some stately ship standing up Channel.

Very pleasant to look upon is that fair Devonshire coast, as having landed the mails we weigh anchor again for Southampton. Very pleasant,

with its green meadows and golden cornlands, and its villages nestling in the bays; while each bold headland stretches out towards you as though in welcome. The night falls and the red eye of a lighthouse gleams out upon the darkening sea, rivaling the starry lamps which appear one by one in the dim vault overhead. A few more hours of quiet, and then—*presto*—I am transported, as by the wave of a magic wand, from the lone, silent heart of a savage country into the din and turmoil of the metropolis of the world.

Reader, the best of friends must part, nor are you and I exceptions to the inexorable rule. We have been together in many wanderings, and if the perusal of these pages has enabled you to pass an agreeable hour or awakened your interest in persons and places hitherto unthought of, they will not have been written in vain.



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